MAKING SCHOOLS MATTER:

LINKING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

IN A CANADIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is a systematic investigation of developments in a Canadian school district which relate the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms. The researcher examines the initiation, implementation, process and progress of the School Effectiveness Project in the Halton Board of Education in Ontario from 1986 to 1991, and highlights the contextual factors that influence the Project's development. The impact of this Project on the school system and teachers in its 81 schools is analysed, with particular attention to the difference in attitudes between elementary (primary) and secondary teachers. The study's findings are critically examined in the light of other research and theories concerning school effectiveness, school improvement and change, and their implications considered for the linkage of these fields of study.

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FOREWORD

The research in this thesis was carried out in a Canadian school district over a five-year period, from 1986 to 1991. The Project examined in this thesis is ongoing. Consequently, it should be noted that results are only partial. It should also be borne in mind that, while the review of the literature incorporates current theory and studies, when the Project commenced in 1986 its developers did not have access to more recent research knowledge. The Project, therefore, developed alongside a supporting theoretical knowledge base and drew from it as it became available.

CHAPTER 1

Understanding School Effectiveness and School Improvement

In an effort to make their schools more effective, educators often ask two related but distinct questions: 'Which of the many activities that we do have greater benefits for pupils?' and: 'How can we make our school better than it is now?' The first question focuses specifically on the impact of schools on pupil outcomes and the characteristics of effective schools, and the second on the implementation of change and school improvement.

Over the last 20 years, two different groups of educational researchers have attempted to answer these questions. Caught in the middle have been practitioners engaged in attempts to improve their schools. These people have wanted high quality, practical information to support their efforts. Thus, they have taken the pieces of research from both traditions that have made most sense to them and, albeit unknowingly, have linked the two areas through their improvement efforts. These efforts have sometimes been haphazard, with uncritical adoption of ideas from research. The question is, can these two areas really be linked? In order to ascertain whether this is possible, it is necessary to review the two paradigms to establish complementary and conflicting areas.

In this chapter, similarities and differences within the research literature of the two traditions will be examined under five headings: definition; origins and aims; research design; key findings; and models and theory. Applications of school effectiveness research findings through school improvement projects will then be discussed, along with other attempts to blend the approaches. The chapter will end with a list of features from each paradigm viewed as necessary for any synthesis, and with the posing of research questions that underlie an attempt to link the two traditions.

Definition

The definitions of school effectiveness and school improvement demonstrate a difference in orientation.

School Effectiveness

Levine and Lezotte (1990) offer a basic definition of 'effectiveness' as the production of a desired result or outcome. Effectiveness, therefore, is not a neutral concept because defining a school as effective forces choices to be made among competing values (Firestone, 1991a). While educators may believe in a broad range of educational goals, North American school effectiveness researchers of the 1970s and 1980s generally conformed to a narrow definition of effectiveness, that of basic skills achievement measured by standardised assessments. With exception of the research by Brookover et al. (1979), all the earlier studies of effectiveness focused entirely on low level academic outcomes. Many recent applications of effective schools research also focus on similar outcomes (Taylor, 1990), and Reynolds and Creemers (1990) note that in several countries the school effectiveness movement is associated with a narrow, back-to-basics orientation to the teaching of basic skills. Similarly Fraser (1989) in a synthesis of meta-analyses uses cognitive measures of student achievement to define effectiveness which he, himself, admits is limited. It is questionable whether he would have found sufficient meta-analyses had he selected a broader definition. Gorodetsky et al. (1992) also argue that an effective elementary school is one that teaches the basic skills and that all other aims are 'additional'. The rationale behind Britain's Education Reform Act (1988) also views school examination results as the criteria for judging their effectiveness.

British research, in contrast, views educational aims as being more diverse. Rutter et al.'s (1979) study of secondary schooling focused on attainment and three social outcomes of schooling - behaviour, attendance and delinquency - while Reynolds' (1982) study of Welsh comprehensive schools examined attendance, attainment and delinquency. In Mortimore et al.'s (1988) primary school study the scope was broadened to include academic outcomes of reading, writing, written and practical mathematics and speaking skills, and social outcomes of behaviour, attitudes, attendance and self-concept.

While Edmonds (1979) endorsed basic skills, his interest also lay in equity. His definition blended quality with equity:

> *"I require that an effective school bring the children of the poor to those minimal masteries of basic school skills that now describe minimally successful pupil performance for the children of the middle class"* (p. 16).

Edmonds' legacy has been continued worldwide and many researchers have emphasised equity (for example, Teddlie and Stringfield, 1985; Scheerens, 1987; Bashi and Sass, 1989; Chrispeels and Pollack, 1989). Essentially, the underlying belief of the school effectiveness movement is that all children can learn (Murphy, 1992), although it is interesting to note that while ethnic and social class equity have been the focus of several studies, gender equity has been little examined (Levine and Lezotte, 1990), Mortimore et al.'s (1988) study being one exception.

Recent British research has broadened the definition of effectiveness. Given the impact of background on student attainment (Essen and Wedge, 1982; Sammons et al., 1983), the focus was switched to an examination of progress (Mortimore et al., 1988). Mortimore (1991a) summarises:

> *". . . an effective school . . . is one in which pupils progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake"* (p. 9).

This definition has been adopted in various countries (Nuttall et al., 1989; Brandsma and Knuver, 1989; de Jong and Braster, 1989; McGaw et al., 1991; Stringfield et al., 1992), and is consistent with Mann's (1989) production function notion of 'value added' by the school.

While most definitions of school effectiveness have focused on student outcomes, Richards (1991) has noted a move in definition from outcomes to process. This is exemplified in Rosenholtz's (1989) study of elementary schools in eight Tennessee districts where she defined effectiveness largely in organisational terms. Three of the four measures she used were: teachers' opportunities to learn; their certainty about their instructional practice; and their workplace commitment. The fourth focused on the more traditional student learning outcomes. It is interesting to note these outcomes, given their more usual examination within school improvement studies as processes.

School Improvement

On the surface, there is less discrepancy over the meaning of school improvement. Indeed, while Marsh (1988) maintains that *"the literature is overflowing with divergent statements about what counts as school improvement"* (p. 4), in reality there are very few actual definitions. The most frequently quoted current definition emanated from the International School Improvement Project (ISIP), where van Velzen et al. (1985) incorporated research findings into a comprehensive statement:

> *". . a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively"* (p. 48).

The components of the definition have been embellished (van Velzen et al., 1985; Hopkins, 1987). 'Systematic' and 'sustained' refer to careful planning and management of change over a period of years. The emphasis on 'learning conditions and other related conditions' denotes that school improvement extends beyond classroom change. Other school-wide conditions such as structure, policy, climate, relations and curriculum must also receive attention. 'One or more schools' acknowledges the school as the key unit and focus of change, although other schools might also be involved. 'Educational goals' incorporate, *"what a school is 'supposed' to accomplish for its students and for society"* (Hopkins, 1990a, p. 182). These might include academic, social and vocational skills, and also citizenship, equity and other social functions.

In this definition, however, it is clear there is also an intricate relationship between school improvement and change. Hopkins (1992) regards school improvement as 'the most appropriate means' to achieve educational change, but does not equate school improvement and change because many imposed changes do not result in the improvement of student outcomes, and most ignore the key components of culture and school organisation. Thus, while school improvement is change, change is not necessarily school improvement. Fullan (1992a) elaborates:

> *". .successful school improvement . . . depends on an understanding of the problem of change at the level of practice and the development of corresponding strategies for bringing about beneficial reforms"* (p. 27).

While he, too, emphasises that benefits must accrue if change is to qualify as school improvement, his definition also focuses on the need to understand the complexity of change. In common with the ISIP definition Fullan (1991a) also clarifies the beneficial reforms as the accomplishment of schools' goals.

Despite an increased belief that the school is the centre of change and that its relationship with the school system and the world outside is important (Sirotnik, 1987; Fullan, 1991a; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991), no definition of school improvement has yet articulated this, although Fullan

(1991a) points out that, *"Capacity for improvement must permeate all aspects of the system"* (p. 214).

As demonstrated in these definitions, it is difficult to define or write about school improvement without recognition of the importance of change. In this review, therefore, research and theory related to both change and school improvement will be included, where appropriate.

Conclusion

While there are a variety of definitions of school effectiveness, there is some dichotomy between those researchers who believe that the chief focus should be on those students 'at risk' while others are committed to quality for all children. Additionally, some researchers take a narrow approach with a basic skills emphasis, while others perceive schools' aims to be more diverse. An emphasis on progress versus achievement is a third area of difference. Finally, some researchers are moving towards a broader definition to encompass teacher outcomes. This process orientation has more in common with school improvement research. Interestingly, at the same time, the definition of school improvement is moving closer to those of school effectiveness in a more recent acknowledgement of outcomes. Unlike school effectiveness, school improvement does not suffer from a wide array of definitions. There is, however, a lack of clarity and some overlap between school improvement and change.

Origins and Aims

The definitions of school effectiveness and school improvement reflect their origins and aims as the following review demonstrates.

School Effectiveness

The emergence of the school effectiveness movement in the United States resulted from findings of studies by social scientists (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972) who argued that home background, including social class and economic status, had a far greater influence on a child's development than did the school they attended. Similar results were found in Britain in the Plowden Report (1967). This research led to a wide range of studies, both to separate the impact of family background from that of school (Reynolds, 1985), and to ascertain whether some schools were more effective than others and, if so, what factors contributed to the positive effects (for example, Rutter et al., 1979; Brookover et al., 1979;

Reynolds, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1983). The title of the British study School Matters (Mortimore et al., 1988) illustrated the intent of school effectiveness researchers to demonstrate that schools, indeed, made a difference.

The aim of school effectiveness researchers is to ascertain whether differential resources, processes and organisational arrangements affect student outcomes, and if so in what way. Ultimately, school effectiveness research aims to describe what an effective school looks like or, as Mortimore (1991b) describes it:

> *"Quite simply, it is the search for ways - both adequate and reliable - to measure the quality of the school"* (p. 214).

Indeed, in its effort to specify characteristics that are associated with successful student outcomes, the movement has been viewed as 'prescriptive' (Clark et al., 1984). The philosophies of different school effectiveness researchers, however, may vary according to their background. While some are university academics, others work in school districts. Firestone (1991b) perceives a continuum:

> *". . .running from pure researchers who emphasize the value of truth to applied researchers who want accurate research but insist that it support the service concerns of educators to pure educators who concentrate on working with children"* (p. 14).

In terms of the purpose of the research, as well as its design and dissemination, school district researchers may both have different ideas and be under different constraints from university researchers, and both of these may differ from those who work in school improvement.

School Improvement

The aims of school improvement, in line with its definitions, are different from those of school effectiveness. School improvement researchers work to understand the processes and stages of change that lead to successful outcomes. A key goal, notes Hopkins (1987), is:

> *"Improving the competencies of a school to manage itself, to analyze its problems and its needs and to develop and carry out a strategy of change. . ."* (p. 5).

Hence, the school improvement researcher, by Firestone's (1991b) definition above, is an applied researcher. However, it is not only

researchers who engage in school improvement. Educators, themselves, are the fundamental backbone of school improvement. Many, while engaged in school improvement efforts, also monitor these efforts internally (for example, Killion, 1989; Johnston et al., 1990; Murphy, 1991). Further evidence of practitioner involvement was also seen in the International School Improvement Project (ISIP) where working groups contained policy makers, teacher representatives, members of support systems and university personnel (Hopkins, 1987). Thus, there is a difference within the tradition between the research, development and dissemination approach of the researchers, and school-based projects developed and carried out by practitioners (Creemers and Lugthart, 1989).

The term 'school improvement' first became prominent in the 1960s. In the United States it was associated with federal and state programmes in specific areas such as bilingual and science education (Marsh, 1988). Similarly, in Britain and elsewhere, it reflected a technological view, in that innovations were introduced to schools from outside in a top-down manner (Reynolds et al., 1992). Its original targets were organisation and curriculum, and pupil-oriented outcomes were the goal. Lack of teacher commitment led to a new improvement paradigm in the 1980s, that celebrated a 'bottom-up' approach through use of practitioner rather than external knowledge. Its focus was shifted from the school to the teacher, although the improvement attempt was 'whole school' oriented (Reynolds, 1988). It emphasised the notion of school self-evaluation (Clift et al., 1987) or school-based review (Bollen and Hopkins, 1987). The outcomes of schooling, rather than being accepted as given, were seen as problematic and open for debate, as the movement shifted in orientation towards the process of change.

Conclusion

The aims of school effectiveness and school improvement traditionally have been dissimilar, partly due to their different origins, but also because of the diverse orientations of those who work within the two movements. While the central aim of school effectiveness studies is research-based, school improvement studies, as exemplified in the work of the International School Improvement Project (van Velzen et al., 1985) are, in Hopkins' (1987) words:

> *". . . moving towards the vision of the 'problem solving' or 'thinking' or 'relatively autonomous' school and . . . promoting and evaluating school improvement strategies"* (p. 4).

Interestingly, as Clark et al. (1984) argue, the two approaches share input and process variables although, both in their outcome orientation and investigation methods, these are treated differently, as the following review demonstrates.

Research Design

As has been shown, school effectiveness and school improvement have very different origins and philosophies. This can also be seen in their research designs.

School Effectiveness

Within the last few years, there have been major improvements in school effectiveness research design, as demonstrated in much of the research reported at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (Reynolds et al., 1989a; Creemers et al., 1989; Bashi and Sass, 1992), and in an issue of the International Journal of Educational Research devoted to school effectiveness research developments (Creemers and Scheerens, 1989).

Following the large quantitative social science studies (Coleman et al., 1966), early North American research on 'instructionally effective schools' (Clark et al., 1984) largely constituted outlier studies (for example, New York State Department of Education, 1974; Brookover and Schneider, 1975), and case study approaches (Weber, 1971; Edmonds and Frederiksen, 1979; Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Glenn, 1981; Levine and Stark, 1981). In both cases, the research was criticised for its sample size, lack of generalisability and methodological inadequacies (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Rowan et al., 1983).

While Rutter et al.'s (1979) secondary school study was based on only a small sample of schools, it was unusual in that it was longitudinal and concentrated on changes in pupil outcomes to demonstrate the school's quality. The quantitative focus of this research was continued in other British studies (Reynolds, 1982; Gray et al., 1983; Mortimore et al., 1988; Tizard et al., 1988; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989) and is also found in recent European research (see reviews in Creemers and Lugthart, 1989; Creemers and Knuver, 1989).

Measurement of Intake

Most school effectiveness studies have been criticised for their inadequate control of intake variables (Gray, 1983; Rowan et al., 1983; Levine and Lezotte, 1990). In order to assess the 'value' added by the school, it is essential to adjust for various background factors at the level of the individual child (Nuttall et al., 1989). Mortimore et al. (1988) found significant differences in parental occupations, income level, fluency in English, family size, and nursery education experience, as well as in reading, writing and mathematics attainment and behaviour at the start of junior school. It would have been inappropriate to assess the effectiveness of different schools without taking such differences into account.

Outcomes Measured

As discussed earlier (see Definitions), outcomes (dependent variables) have been largely measured in terms of basic skills achievement on standardised tests. This has caused concern (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Rowan et al., 1983; Cuban, 1983; Good and Brophy, 1986; Creemers and Reynolds, 1989; Levine and Lezotte, 1990). Few studies have focused on social outcomes. In the United States, Brookover et al. (1979) and Stringfield and Teddlie (1989) have examined student attitudes. In Britain, in contrast, there has been an emphasis on social as well as academic outcomes (Rutter et al., 1979; Reynolds, 1982), culminating in Mortimore et al.'s (1988) study of four social outcomes - attitudes, behaviour, self-concept and attendance - as well as a range of academic outcomes that included practical mathematics, speaking skills and writing in addition to the more commonly assessed reading and written mathematics. There is now consensus that academic outcomes must also reflect higher level skills (Mackenzie, 1983; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Reynolds and Packer, 1992), that a broad range of outcomes is necessary to assess a school's effectiveness (Rowan et al., 1983; Good and Brophy, 1986; Nuttall et al., 1989; Mortimore 1992), and that these measures must be meaningful (Bosker and Scheerens, 1989; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Richards, 1991; Cuttance, 1992).

Processes Examined

There has also been variation in the processes (independent variables) assessed in different school effectiveness studies. Generally, this research has focused on organisational variables and has been criticised

for neglect of classroom examination (Rowan et al., 1983; Reynolds, 1989; Murphy, 1992). Classrooms, however, have been a focus of three major studies (Rutter et al., 1979; Mortimore et al., 1988; Stringfield and Teddlie, 1990). The inclusion of classroom level process data is particularly important given that recent studies using more sophisticated analysis methods demonstrate most of the variation among schools is due to classroom variation (Scheerens et al., 1989).

Data-Gathering Instruments

School effectiveness research has tended towards quantitative data-gathering techniques: for example, large-scale surveys, tests, interviews and, in fewer cases, classroom observation and field notes. The Louisiana School Effectiveness Study is unique in its use of qualitative instruments and analysis techniques (Miles and Huberman, 1984) in its fourth phase (Stringfield et al., 1992).

Analysis Methods

Methodological techniques used in most North American and many earlier European studies were criticised (Tizard et al., 1980; Goldstein, 1980; Reynolds, 1989). Recent studies (Mortimore et al., 1988; Brandsma and Knuver, 1989) have used multi-level modelling techniques (Aitkin and Longford, 1986; Goldstein, 1987; Raudenbush and Bryk, 1988) to assess differences between classes, year groups and schools. Further criticism has been levelled at the use of correlational techniques to determine effective practices because it is difficult to establish the direction of influence (Rowan et al., 1983; Mortimore, 1992). While longitudinal studies may reduce this problem, the issue of causality remains.

Size and Stability of School Effects

Uncertainties still exist and researchers continue to devote time to understand more clearly the size of school effects (Gray, 1981; Gray et al., 1986; Bosker and Scheerens, 1989; Fraser, 1989; Cuttance, 1992), and their stability over time (Bosker and Scheerens, 1989; Nuttall et al., 1989), across classes, departments or subject boundaries (Bosker and Scheerens, 1989; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989) and between different groups of students (Nuttall et al., 1989; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Cuttance, 1992).

School Improvement

Research design within the school improvement paradigm mirrors its aims, drawing on qualitative and naturalistically-oriented methods as well as quantitative measures to examine change and improvement efforts. Two large-scale North American studies were the Rand study of federally-sponsored education programmes (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977, 1978) that investigated 293 change projects and incorporated 29 field studies, and the study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (DESSI) (Crandall et al., 1982). This three-year examination of federal and state dissemination activities examined strategies to promote adoption and use of new educational practices in 146 school districts. It also blended a large-scale quantitative study with an in-depth qualitative case study of 12 schools (Huberman and Miles, 1984). The case study approach has also been adopted in more recent school improvement studies (Rossman et al., 1988; Louis and Miles, 1990; Pink, 1990) and in a British primary school study (Nias et al., 1989) whose aim was not to study school improvement. However, its rich description of school culture adds considerably to school improvement knowledge. Indeed, qualitative studies of school improvement are rare in Britain (Reynolds, 1988).

Outcomes Measured

School improvement efforts have been criticised for failure to evaluate change in student outcomes (Creemers and Reynolds, 1989). Certainly, through its process orientation much North American school improvement research has tended to focus on measures of adoption, use and stabilisation of innovations, as well as people's attitudes to change and skill level (Loucks and Hall, 1979; Crandall et al., 1982). More recent projects in American school districts, as well as studies elsewhere, however, have placed greater emphasis on student outcomes, albeit largely through standardised achievement tests (Bashi and Sass, 1989; Louis and Miles, 1990; Brickner and Chacham, 1992; King, 1992). A shift towards outcomes is being seen both because of calls for increased accountability, and as key proponents of school improvement emphasise its place in improvement efforts and the change process (Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1991a; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

Processes Examined

The processes examined in school improvement studies do not differ from those in school effectiveness studies, although the focus varies (Clark et al., 1984). While school effectiveness researchers investigate whether teacher involvement in decision-making discerns between more or less effective schools (for example, Mortimore et al., 1988), school improvement research is more likely to examine the development and dynamics of shared decision-making. The earlier emphasis on classrooms in school improvement efforts has been superseded by a focus on the whole school, as exemplified by British school self-evaluation efforts (Clift et al., 1987) and the International School Improvement Project (van Velzen et al., 1985). The essential difficulty with school self-evaluation, however, is the assurance that school improvement will ensue (Hargreaves, 1984; Reynolds, 1988). It is also clear that a greater understanding of the role of school culture is necessary (Hopkins, 1991; Reynolds and Packer, 1992) because what is required to improve a school with a staff who are *"weary, fatalistic,* (and) *used to failure"* (Reynolds and Packer, 1992, p. 179) or 'stuck' (Rosenholtz, 1989) may be very different from strategies that could be employed in a school where staff display a more positive orientation.

Data-Gathering Instruments

School improvement quantitative data-gathering techniques are similar to those used in school effectiveness research, although, due to the increasing preponderance of case studies, there has been a greater emphasis on in-depth observation, field notes, semi-structured and informal interviews, and documentation (for example, Huberman and Miles, 1984; Nias et al., 1989; Louis and Miles, 1990). Differing amounts of time have been spent in case study schools, with some teams spending as many as 30 (Rossman et al., 1988) or 60 days (Nias et al., 1989) in any school during a year. As Reynolds (1988) notes, positivist evaluation strategies are unable to explain the failure of top-down reform efforts. Qualitative data-gathering techniques are more likely to help understand change and people's reactions to it.

Analysis Methods

While qualitative research methods have been frequently used, they have generally been subjected to well-established analytic techniques (for example, Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Hammersley and Atkinson,

1983). For their case study of 12 schools, Miles and Huberman (1984) developed a systematic, rigorous methodology, to enable movement from single-case to multiple-case analysis. This has been used in many subsequent studies.

Conclusion

While school effectiveness and school improvement researchers' aims are diverse, some similarities are seen in research design. Processes examined are generally similar as is, albeit recently, the emphasis on outcomes. With the mixed methodological approach of the Louisiana School Effectiveness Study (Teddlie et al., 1989), further convergence seems likely. Nonetheless, the school improvement paradigm predominantly favours a qualitative approach in contrast to the quantitative slant of school effectiveness researchers. It is interesting to note that there has been less criticism within the school improvement movement over methodology, and that Clark et al.'s (1984) comparative study of the two traditions highlights fewer research criticisms of school improvement. Furthermore, in a recent discussion on the link between the two paradigms, twice as many recommendations for change are made to school effectiveness researchers (Reynolds et al., 1992).

Key Findings

Some similarities between school effectiveness and school improvement can also be seen in the following review of their key findings.

School Effectiveness

Any school effectiveness research review would be remiss if it did not focus on the characteristics found to be associated with greater effectiveness. Debate over these characteristics has been intense. While some researchers (for example, D'Amico, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1983) have maintained there is no consensus on the key characteristics of effectiveness, others (Joyce et al., 1983; Levine and Lezotte, 1990) believe there is sufficient overlap to provide guidance to practitioners who wish to use the findings. Context also plays a role, as will be shown in the following review.

Characteristics of Effective Schools

The best known characteristics, or correlates as they are sometimes described, are those from Edmonds' (1979) work. These five

characteristics were:

1. An orderly climate.
2. An emphasis on basic skills acquisition.
3. High expectations for students.
4. Strong administrative leadership.
5. Frequent monitoring of student progress.

Two major British studies highlighted some similar, but other different, findings. Rutter et al.'s (1979) research was hailed as the first major study to examine secondary school effectiveness. Its characteristics linked with effectiveness can be summarised under six headings:

1. Positive academic focus, through high expectations, clear academic goals, and homework.
2. Focus on rewards, praise and appreciation, rather than punishment.
3. Involvement of pupils in educational activities and through responsibility positions.
4. Classroom organisation, through advance lesson preparation, maintenance of pupils' attention, unobtrusive discipline maintenance, and effective time-keeping.
5. A pleasant environment, through well-cared-for buildings, pupil access to telephones, and accessible teachers.
6. Strong management, with firm leadership and decisions that represented teachers' views.

Mortimore et al.'s (1988) elementary study, in contrast, generated 12 key factors, although some common themes are evident:

1. Purposeful headteacher leadership, with an understanding of curriculum, staff development needs, and a monitoring function.
2. Deputy head involvement in decision-making.
3. Teacher involvement in decision-making.
4. Consistency of teaching philosophy throughout the school.
5. Pupil autonomy within a well-organised structure.
6. Intellectually challenging teaching that emphasised high expectations.
7. A busy, work-centred environment.
8. Limited focus within sessions, where pupils worked within the same one or two subject areas, and adjustment of work to meet their needs.

9. Maximum communication between teachers and pupils, through an appropriate blend of whole-class, group and individual teaching.
10. The keeping of academic and social development records.
11. Parental involvement in classrooms, around school and at home.
12. A positive climate, that emphasised praise, extra-curricular activities and positive relationships between pupils and teachers.

While the findings of the two British studies differ from each other and Edmonds' list in some ways, there is overlap. It should also be considered that different researchers do not always choose to study the same school and classroom processes. This inevitably accounts for some differences in findings. An interesting study with a different focus was carried out by Rosenholtz (1989), who studied the school's social organisation. She highlighted two distinctive cultures: 'moving' or 'learning enriched' schools; and 'stuck' or 'learning impoverished' schools. The moving schools were characterised by:

1. Shared goals, and an agreement on the definition of teaching.
2. Teacher collaboration, where teaching was viewed as inherently difficult and *"many minds tended to work better together"* (p. 208).
3. Teacher learning, where continuous improvement was a norm.
4. Teacher certainty, that led teachers to search for reasons and ways to help each other.
5. Teacher commitment, where most teachers held the belief that everything was possible.

Fullan (1991a) notes that most of Mortimore et al.'s (1988) key factors are related to Rosenholtz' themes, and that similar themes are found in studies of secondary school improvement (Wilson and Corcoran, 1988; Louis and Miles, 1990).

Purkey and Smith (1983), in a review of school effectiveness studies, argue that an effective school is distinguished by a culture that emphasises successful teaching and learning. They draw from effective schools research, and from implementation and school organisation theory and research, and suggest nine organisation-structure variables, and four process variables, 'the dynamic' of the effective school.

<u>Organisation-structure variables</u>

1. School-site management.
2. Instructional leadership.
3. Staff stability.
4. Curriculum articulation and organisation.

5. school-wide staff development.
6. Parental involvement and support.
7. school-wide recognition of academic success.
8. Maximized learning time.
9. District support.

Process variables

1. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships.
2. Sense of community.
3. Clear goals and high expectations commonly shared.
4. Order and discipline.

In a recent review of North American and British studies, Levine and Lezotte (1990) have incorporated some of Purkey and Smith's (1983) process characteristics. Levine and Lezotte (1990) describe nine characteristics of unusually effective schools and provide detailed supporting evidence for each. A summary follows:

1. Productive school climate and culture, that emphasises: teacher commitment to a shared mission; cohesion; collaboration; communication; problem-solving; shared decision-making; recognition of positive performance; and an orderly environment.
2. Focus on student acquisition of central learning skills, with maximum use of learning time and an emphasis on skill mastery.
3. Appropriate monitoring of student progress.
4. Practice-oriented staff development at the school site.
5. Leadership, that includes: teacher support, selection and replacement; monitoring of activities; resource acquisition; instructional leadership; high energy for school improvement; and effective use of support staff.
6. Parent involvement.
7. Instructional arrangements and implementation, that include: effective teaching practices; higher order learning emphasis; appropriate pacing and curriculum alignment; successful grouping arrangements; active and enriched learning; coordination in curriculum and instruction; a range of materials; classroom adaptation; and time for reading, language and mathematics.
8. High operationalised academic and behaviour expectations and requirements for students.

9. Other possible correlates, that include: students' sense of efficacy; personal development of students; and multicultural instruction and sensitivity.

This summary is interesting in that it draws from school and teacher effectiveness research bases, as well as that of school improvement, and provides a comprehensive, if general, list of characteristics. It also acknowledges equity, a key theme in school effectiveness research, and student social development, promoted more particularly in British studies. It does not, however, address the change process.

In addition to lists of characteristics, some researchers have devoted time to detailed examinations of particular variables, for example leadership (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; Smith and Andrews, 1989; van de Grift, 1990). Generalisability of school effectiveness research findings has been questioned because of the different contexts in which studies have been carried out.

Contextual Differences

It has become increasingly clear that 'what works' in one context may lack relevance in others. This has been found in studies of schools serving students from different social class backgrounds (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986; Teddlie et al., 1989) and in international attempts to replicate one country's findings elsewhere or examine the same factors (Vermeulen, 1987; van de Grift, 1990; Creemers, 1992). This could be because research instruments do not translate well from one cultural context to another, but it has also been noted, for example, that the Dutch interpretation of leadership as a 'first among their equals' is different from that in North America and Britain (Scheerens and Creemers, 1989).

While there is some uncertainty regarding the relevance of the characteristics identified in effective elementary schools to the secondary setting (Firestone and Herriott, 1982; Levine and Lezotte, 1990), a study by Leithwood et al. (1989) found that at least some aspect of 23 of the 34 characteristics identified in a review of 20 effective secondary schools were also highlighted in reviews of effective elementary schools. Levine and Lezotte (1990) conclude:

> *". . .since secondary schools generally are more complex and difficult to improve than are elementary schools, it almost certainly is true that unusual success at the secondary level*

> *involves action that goes 'beyond' the usual correlates, as well as differing manifestations of the correlates in practice"* (p. 63).

It is clear that further study is necessary to understand elementary and secondary school differences, and that context must be considered in any application of the characteristics. Levine and Lezotte (1990) note that:

> *". . .analysts usually have tried to identify correlates at a level of generality sufficient to allow for a variety of manifestations in practice while still pointing toward key specific aspects of school effectiveness"* (p. 9).

This may provide educators with the necessary flexibility to approach the findings in the light of their own context.

School Improvement

In the last 20 years, understanding of school improvement and educational change has increased significantly. For this review, frameworks used by Clark et al. (1984) and Fullan (1991a) have been adapted. First, clusters of factors that have enhanced school improvement are identified. Second, themes *"more likely to capture the dynamics of the change process"* (Fullan, 1991a, p. 67) are described.

Factors that Influence School Improvement

The three clusters of factors reviewed below are processes and organisational issues, innovation characteristics, and people.

Processes and Organisational Issues: Most researchers see three broad phases to the change process. The first, variously known as initiation, mobilisation or adoption, incorporates the process that leads up to the decision to change. The second, implementation or initial use, consists of early experiences of putting reforms into practice. The third, labelled institutionalisation, continuation, routinisation or incorporation, describes whether or not innovations are built into ongoing practice (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Huberman and Miles, 1984). Fullan (1982) has added a fourth state, outcome, that refers to a variety of results, whether student, teacher or organisational, but generally focuses on the extent of improvement according to specified criteria.

It is now well known that *"change is a process, not an event"* (Fullan, 1982, p. 41), and that even moderate change can take between three and

five years, while complex organisational restructuring may take five to ten years. Research also suggests that change does not follow simple rules. Rather, factors that do not appear to blend have to be balanced, for example simultaneous 'bottom-up top-downness', fidelity and adaptivity, and evaluation and non-evaluation (Fullan, 1985).

Various individual and organisational factors have also been demonstrated to be influential, and to determine the school's readiness for change (Fullan, 1991a). These include the compatibility of the innovation with the school's culture (Fullan, 1991a; Fullan and Miles, 1992), increasingly recognised as a fundamental influence on school improvement (Hopkins, 1991a; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Reynolds and Packer, 1992). Teachers' concerns, interests and needs are also important (Loucks and Hall, 1979; Huberman, 1988), as are their skills. Fullan (1985) suggests that changes in teacher behaviour precede rather than follow changes in belief. The implication of this is that it is not always possible to gain entire commitment to a change before it is made, because, for some people, it is only through implementation that meaning will be derived. Similarly, while broad participation during implementation has been found essential, early coordination by a small group, who engage in ongoing communication with all staff, is most effective (Louis and Miles, 1990; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991).

Innovation Characteristics: School systems and governments sometimes opt for superficial solutions, or 'bandwagons'. These have been demonstrated not to work (Fullan and Miles, 1992) and are viewed to lead to unnecessary overload (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992).

Fullan (1991a) argues that successful innovations meet a need, are clear, complex, and of high quality. Simple changes have been found to be less successful than those of larger scope (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977; Clark et al., 1984). Essentially, a change has to be worth the effort (Clark et al., 1984).

Change also rarely involves single innovations. Rather, several ideas and activities are involved simultaneously (Anderson, 1989; Fullan, 1991a). Sarason (1990) concurs:

> *". . .what you seek to change is so embedded in a system of interacting parts that if it is changed, then changes elsewhere are likely to occur"* (p. 16).

People: School improvement depends on many players. While pupils are at the heart of the educational process, hardly anything is known about what they feel about educational change because they have not been asked (Fullan, 1991a). Knowledge is greater of the involvement of teachers, headteachers (principals), district office personnel, external change agents, and the community.

Teachers: As already noted, a school's readiness for change depends to a large extent on individual teachers. The psychological state of teachers has been demonstrated to have an impact (Sarason, 1971; Reynolds, 1987; Hopkins, 1990b). Reynolds and Packer (1992) maintain that neglect of interpersonal and psychological processes may lead teachers to behave defensively to protect themselves from innovations that might expose their inadequacies. The valuing of individuals as people and their contributions to others (Nias et al., 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991) would seem to be one way to enhance teachers' self-esteem and build trust.

Various researchers have found that improved outcomes have resulted from teachers working together and sharing ideas (Little, 1982; Mortimore et al., 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; Nias et al., 1989). Nonetheless, collegiality for its own sake has not been shown to bring about improvement (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). Change has to be meaningful for people, and teachers derive most meaning from their work with pupils in the classroom (Lortie, 1975). Consequently, curriculum and instruction foci are fundamental to all improvement (van Velzen et al., 1985; Levine and Lezotte, 1990).

Principals: Findings have been mixed with regard to the principal's role in school improvement. While all studies have demonstrated that the principal influences the likelihood of change, the Rand study (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977) did not find that principals played an instructional or change leadership role. More recently, research has highlighted the fundamental role of leadership in school improvement, and is shifting from a belief that instructional leadership can provide what is necessary to motivate teachers and guide them through change (Smith and Andrews, 1989) to a greater emphasis on the principal's cultural (Nias et al., 1989; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Caldwell and Spinks, 1992) and transformational (Sergiovanni, 1990; Leithwood, 1992) leadership role.

District Offices: School districts (Local Education Authorities) have been found to play a major role in school improvement, both through advocacy

for change (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman and Miles, 1984; Firestone and Corbett, 1987; David, 1989; Coleman and LaRocque, 1990; Brickner and Chacham, 1992) and visitation and support (Cox, 1983; Huberman and Miles, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1989; Pink, 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990; Corbett and Wilson, 1992).

Advocacy, however, cannot be equated with mandates. Mandated change has been shown not to work unless the proposed activities make sense to the school's situation (Goodlad, 1979; Dodd and Rosenbaum, 1986). What has been demonstrated to be more effective is school-based decision-making within a guiding central office framework (Fullan, 1985; Lezotte, 1989a). In a review of school-based management, David (1989) notes that the movement of many decisions to schools represents a major change in the way that districts operate, as authority and responsibility are shared between districts and schools. Reform efforts in some countries, for example Great Britain, have gone further, through the devolution of all major decision-making to schools. As Lawton (1989a) notes, however, an advantage of Local Education Authorities is *"that they encourage cooperation between schools rather than competition"* (p. 118). Indeed, as yet, there is little research evidence to demonstrate that site-based management leads to greater improvement.

External change agents: Outside assistance or stimulation has been shown to have the greatest influence on implementation when it is integrated with local support efforts (Crandall et al., 1982; Corbett et al., 1984; Fullan, 1991a).

Community: While parental and community involvement for school improvement has been demonstrated important in many studies (Ziegler, 1987; Mortimore et al., 1988; Wilson and Corcoran, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989), there is little evidence to suggest that parental involvement in school governance structures affects students' learning (Fullan, 1991a), although other benefits may derive.

With regard to school boards, in their study of 10 school districts in British Columbia, Coleman and LaRocque (1990) found great improvements where the elected school board and the district administrators worked more closely together.

Key School Improvement Themes

The themes reviewed in this section are adapted from those that emerged from Louis and Miles' (1990) study of high school improvement. They are vision-building, planning for change, staff development and resource assistance, problem-coping, empowerment and monitoring.

Vision-Building: The importance of vision to school improvement has been stressed by many researchers and writers (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Block, 1987; Barth, 1990; Schlechty, 1990). Fullan (1991a) describes how vision-building:

> *". . .permeates the organization with values, purpose, and integrity for both the what and how of improvement"* (p. 81).

Louis and Miles (1990) found visions to be *"a complex braid of the evolving themes of the change program"* (p. 237). In their schools, vision-building was a dynamic process that started with a small group of people but spread throughout the school.

Planning: Some researchers believe that schools and school systems are 'nonrational' (Patterson et al., 1986; Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1991a). The consequence of this is that rational planning models at both system and school level will not work. At system level, Patterson et al. (1986) argue for strategic planning (Cope, 1981), a planning model that allows for the dynamics of change and assumes that environmental trends influence decision-making.

At school level, Louis and Miles (1990) view 'good planning' as essential for positive change, but note that because of changing external pressures or internal disagreements over priorities, no specific plan can exist for long. In their study, planning was evolutionary, with *"many twists and turns as unexpected events occur along the way"* (p. 193). Similar ideas have been proposed in the business sector where Kanter (1989) encourages the attitude of 'learning by doing'.

The concept of school development planning (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991) is related to evolutionary planning in that while detailed plans are constructed for one year, longer-term priorities are only sketched, to allow for changes that arise from differing needs or external initiatives.

Staff Development and Resource Assistance: Huberman and Miles (1984) found that:

> *"Large-scale, change-bearing innovations lived or died by the amount and quality of assistance that their users received once the change process was under way"* (p. 273).

This statement has been supported by many other researchers (Louis and Rosenblum, 1981; Pink, 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1991a; Fullan and Miles, 1992). Fullan (1990a) cautions, however, that staff development can be misapplied unless it is understood in relation to the meaning of change and the change process. Hence, 'one-shot' strategies are of little assistance.

Louis and Miles (1990) found that improving schools needed a variety of resources and that change could not be managed with the regular resource level. These resources included: money; time; space; equipment; personnel; 'big ideas', for example school effectiveness knowledge; and materials. Louis and Miles (1990) also concluded that some schools were better than others at resource location, acquisition and use.

Problem-coping: The process of school improvement has been found to be 'problem-rich' (Fullan and Miles, 1992). Louis and Miles (1990) note that more successful schools do not have fewer problems than other schools. However, they cope better with their problems, through the application of 'deep' and 'shallow' coping styles as appropriate. Deeper coping styles include the creation of new roles, redesign of ideas, and provision of extra assistance and time. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) also assume that development planning will not be problem-free, likening the action plan to the game Snakes and Ladders, and offer ideas to help diagnose difficulties related to the choices individual schools make.

Empowerment: Miles (1987) believes that teachers must be motivated and interested to make a change. In short, they must possess the will to make school improvement succeed. This will has been seen as being generated by increased empowerment. Rosenholtz (1989) found that teachers' sense of optimism, hope and commitment was associated with workplace conditions where they felt professionally empowered. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991), in the title to their book on development planning, emphasise the importance of empowerment. Five specific strategies for involvement are outlined by Louis and Miles (1990): power sharing;

rewards for staff; openness and inclusiveness; expanding leadership roles; and patience.

Monitoring: Fullan (1991a) advises that the monitoring of the change process is as important as the measurement of outcomes, and points out that good change processes develop trust, relevance, and the desire to get better results. Inherent in this notion is the idea of increased professional accountability: that is, responsibility to oneself and one's colleagues (East Sussex Accountability Project, 1980). In this way, monitoring is linked to empowerment, in that shared commitment to the school's improvement also brings with it shared responsibility for the school's progress towards such improvement and success in achieving it (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991).

Fullan and Miles (1992), in a discussion on what works and does not work in educational reform, offer seven propositions for success that summarise most of the reviewed factors and themes. They are:

1. Change is learning, loaded with uncertainty.
2. Change is a journey, not a blueprint.
3. Problems are our friends.
4. Change is resource-hungry.
5. Change requires the power to manage it.
6. Change is systemic; reform must focus on the system's culture and all of its other components simultaneously.
7. All large-scale change is implemented locally.

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) also summarise seven assumptions about change developed within the International School Improvement Project (van Velzen et al., 1985; Hopkins, 1987) that are based on earlier findings of participants from 14 countries. They also reflect the factors and themes reviewed above:

1. The school as the centre of change, with its unique context.
2. A systematic approach to change, that takes several years.
3. A key focus for change, that is the school's 'internal conditions', teaching and learning and management arrangements.
4. Accomplishing educational goals more effectively, with a broader definition of outcome that includes teachers' professional development.
5. A multi-level perspective, that incorporates the school, system, and roles of all people within them.

6. Integrative implementation strategies, that link 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches.
7. The drive towards institutionalisation, such that change becomes part of 'natural behaviour'.

While the above review focuses on school improvement in general, some reference needs to be made to the literature base concerning contextual differences between elementary and secondary schools.

Differences between Elementary and Secondary Schools

In 1985, Fullan wrote that not enough was known about differences between elementary and secondary schools in their school improvement attempts because there had been few attempts to reform secondary schools. Since then, however, much of what is understood about school improvement has been derived from secondary school studies (Rossman et al., 1988; Fullan and Newton, 1988; Louis and Miles, 1990; Ouston et al., 1991), although understanding of the role of school culture has still largely been the domain of primary and elementary school research (Nias et al., 1989; Rosenholtz, 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

What is known is that change is fundamentally more complex in secondary schools due to the diversity of purposes and objectives (Louis and Miles, 1990), size and the complex department structure (Powell et al., 1985; Hargreaves and Earl, 1990), and their 'looser coupling', leading to a greater decentralisation of authority (Louis and Miles, 1990). Further understanding of the process of school improvement is necessary in both elementary and secondary schools, with, particularly, more emphasis on the role of school culture.

Conclusion

While the key findings of school improvement research are oriented more towards the change process, the two traditions concur on many areas which *"justifies a comparative analysis of these bodies of literature"* (Clark et al., 1984, p. 42). It would seem that more than a comparative analysis is required, given the obvious attempts of people within both fields to incorporate features of both into lists (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Levine and Lezotte, 1990), 'processes' (Fullan, 1985 - see Models and Theory) and projects that link the two paradigms (see Attempts to Link School Effectiveness and School Improvement).

The evolution of models and theories of school effectiveness and school improvement captures elements of the definition, aims and purpose, research design and key findings reviewed thus far.

Models and Theory

The philosophical orientation of school effectiveness and school improvement has led to a different approach to the theoretical underpinnings of the two traditions.

School Effectiveness

Given the large number of studies of school effectiveness and their applications, there is surprisingly little theory on 'why things work in education' (Scheerens and Creemers, 1989). A review of the evolution of school effectiveness theory follows.

Five-factor' Model

Based, predominantly, on the work of Edmonds (1979), the most common model of school effectiveness is one that consists of the correlates of educational achievement (see Key Findings). While different studies have identified varied numbers of correlates, the underlying idea is the same; if these factors are adopted by a school, educational achievement will ensue.

The research base underlying this model has been criticised, particularly for its emphasis on achievement in the basic skills (Ralph and Fenessey, 1983; Rowan et al., 1983; Cuban, 1983). Other problems with this model include: the assumption of causality based on correlational evidence; the independence and locus of the factors; and the tautology of relating an emphasis on basic skills to achievement in basic skills (Scheerens and Creemers, 1989). Furthermore, while this type of model gives some idea on content, it neither offers suggestions on process nor acknowledges the context in which such process might take place.

Context-Input-Process-Output Model

The economic production ideal of inputs and outputs was adapted by various school effectiveness researchers. Controlling for students' backgrounds and previous attainment levels, two longitudinal British studies (Rutter et al., 1979; Mortimore et al., 1988) examined the processes that led to output, student progress, attainment and social development.

In these implicit models, school and classroom processes were combined, although both research teams studied the processes separately and in Mortimore et al.'s (1988) research, in particular, multi-level models were used to examine the different levels within the school. Scheerens (1990) contends that such models provide the best analytic scheme for the development of indicator systems. While this may be true, the model, while employing the descriptor 'process', does not reveal to users the way in which such processes might work.

Integrated Model of School Effectiveness

The analytic systems model above that recognises context, input, process and output variables is taken by Scheerens and Creemers (1989) and further refined by Scheerens (1990) into an integrated model of school effectiveness. The model incorporates contingency theory - the 'situational approach' (Kieser and Kubicek, 1977; Thomson, 1967; Mintzberg, 1979), in that a school's effectiveness can depend on situational or contextual conditions. Various organisational theories are also addressed in the model. While productivity, that is output, is viewed as paramount, resource acquisition, stability and control in the organisation's functioning, and cohesion and morale among its members (Cameron and Whetten, 1983; Faerman and Quinn, 1985) also play roles dependent on contingency factors.

A multi-level framework is used that identifies pupil, classroom and school characteristics, and environmental and contextual influences inherent in contingency theory. Additionally, different types of educational effectiveness research findings are blended to give more breadth, notably those on classroom effectiveness. The authors view the 'higher levels' as providing facilitative conditions for the processes at 'lower levels'. For example, managerial, structural and cultural conditions for effective instruction are found at the school level.

While the emphasis on process is elaborated through the addition of alternative organisational theories, this model does not address the fundamental nature and influence of a school's culture. Indeed, Scheerens and Creemers (1989) define the cultural dimension of organisational functioning as *"a general orientation towards achievement, shared by school leaders and teaching personnel"* (p. 703).

Contingency-Stage Theory of School Effectiveness

Teddlie and Stringfield's (in press) model also highlights schooling's context (contingency). In addition, however, it addresses its process (stage). Three main elements of effectiveness are identified: leadership appropriateness at the school level; teacher readiness at the classroom level; and student learning maturity at the pupil level. The interaction between any two of these three elements comprises 'context'. Based on contextual differences in school effectiveness research findings (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986; Teddlie et al., 1989), different strategies, for example, may be necessary for a staff that is 'ready' to participate than one that is not.

Under 'stage', the authors posit that schools go through stages of effectiveness. Their model divides Levine and Lezotte's (1990) effectiveness and improvement 'characteristics' under four headings: two school level and two classroom level; two that focus on culture - beliefs and perceptions - and two on structure - behaviours and strategies.

Three postulates are offered. First is that schools will deteriorate if left to themselves (Stringfield and Teddlie, 1988, 1989). Second, schools can be improved by recruitment (selection) or development (socialisation). Given that the latter is more likely, time is a consideration. Third, the smaller the component within the school, the easier it is to change. For example, one principal is easier to change than 40 teachers.

While this model acknowledges culture as a key factor, it is seen as less important than structure with a staff who are at a lower stage of readiness, while the importance of structure diminishes for staff at a high stage of readiness. School-level structures include: principal visibility; teacher evaluation, feedback, input, support and staff development. If the authors maintain that a school will decline if left alone, it would seem that some vital facets of ongoing teacher development will be lost if 'structure' is not emphasised with a more committed staff. While it provides a more dynamic theory of school effectiveness and illustrates well the subtleties of within-school context, this model does not get to the heart of the change process, nor does it provide a clearer understanding of the impact of culture on change. Furthermore, unlike Scheeren's (1990) model, it does not address external links, for example with the district or national government.

Postulates Rather Than Theory

Mortimore (1991b) notes controversy that surrounds theory, and 'ordinary people's' ambivalence towards it. His preference is for the construction of a set of postulates that could be tested empirically. These postulates, he believes, should also be focused on school improvement mechanisms.

In summary, while it is clear that school effectiveness models, few though there are, have become more sophisticated, they still do not address adequately the influence of culture, the process by which a school might develop itself, and interconnections with external agencies. They also may not generate practitioner interest. Clearly there is need for theory that is sufficiently practical that it can be applied and tested.

School Improvement

In the field of school improvement and change, while models exist, there appears to be a preference for frameworks, processes and guidelines. As Fullan (1991a) comments:

> *"We do know more about the processes of change as a result of the research of the 1970s and 1980s, only to discover that there are no hard-and-fast rules, rather a set of suggestions or implications given the contingencies specific to local situations"* (p. 47).

In order to understand better different frameworks for school improvement, it is first important to examine the change perspectives within which these operate.

Perspectives on Change

House (1981) maintains that facts, values and suppositions are combined into a complex screen, or perspective, through which any innovation can be viewed. Three perspectives are outlined: technological, political, and cultural. The technological perspective emphasises the production function inherent in top-down change efforts; that there is external knowledge that can be introduced into schools and adopted by them. Negotiation underlies the political perspective, which also reflects concepts such as power, authority, conflict and competing interests. From this perspective, cooperation on an innovation is seen as problematic, rather than automatic. The third perspective, cultural, highlights images of community, shared meanings and values,

environment and context. It assumes that an innovation will be interpreted differently by each culture with whom it comes into contact. Thus, the technological perspective focuses on the innovation itself, the political perspective on the innovation in context, and the cultural perspective on the context (House, 1981). The work of other researchers has tended to emphasise one or other perspective. Some are oriented towards the technological perspective. For example, both the Rand (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977, 1978) and Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (Crandall et al., 1982) studies were set up to monitor reactions to externally introduced change, while Joyce and Showers' (1982) coaching model assumes the validity of technological innovations. In contrast, Ball (1987) and Sarason's more recent work (1990) highlight political influences on change, whereas Sarason's earlier work (1971), Little (1982) and Nias et al. (1989) take a cultural perspective. Sometimes two perspectives are combined, as in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Loucks and Hall, 1979), in which attention is focused both on the levels of use of a technological innovation and the relationships and values inherent in people's stages of concern. In Hargreaves' (1989) examination of different cultures of teaching, he emphasises both the politics and cultural facets of change. Finally, while Fullan's earlier work (Fullan, 1982) tended more towards a technological perspective, with its emphasis on the stages of the change process, his more recent work embraces the other perspectives more fully in its attention to the facets of whole school development (Fullan, 1990a, 1991a, 1992a; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). It would appear that any change attempts should be aware of and attend to ramifications of all three perspectives, for it would seem unlikely that a comprehensive improvement effort would not involve them all. The cultural perspective has been particularly neglected in previous improvement studies and efforts.

The processes and guidelines that follow all tend to blend at least two of the perspectives, although one may be dominant. This review is by no means exhaustive, but gives a flavour of some different theoretical approaches to school improvement.

School-Based Development Process

There are many varieties of this model that had its British origins in school self-review. Foremost among these, and a prototype for many others, were the Guidelines for Review and Internal Development in Schools (GRIDS) (McMahon et al., 1984). The method's intent was to help teachers review and develop their curriculum and organisation. The

authors emphasised the importance of the title in that: the process was not mandatory and schools were encouraged to adapt suggestions as necessary; the focus was on review that would lead to development for improvement; the review was for internal use, not external accountability purposes; and the process was directed at the whole school rather than individual teachers or small groups.

There were five stages of the internal review and development process:

1. Getting started, including consultation and management arrangements.
2. Initial review, incorporating needs assessments and selection of priorities for specific review and development.
3. Specific review, with an emphasis on more detailed investigation and planning.
4. Action for development, including activity, in-service and assessment of the development work's effectiveness.
5. Overview and re-start, emphasising reflection and continuation or need for adaptation.

Subsequent models have followed a broadly similar format (for example, ILEA, 1986) as have guidelines elsewhere (Loucks-Horsley and Hergert, 1985; Education Department of South Australia, 1990; Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990). Britain's school development plan (Hargreaves et al., 1989; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991) and the Australian Collaborative School Management approach (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988) differ slightly in their attention to budgeting as a phase within the cycle. This is in response to the realities of school-based management reform. Thus, for example, within the school development plan's audit phase, the school examines how and why resources have been used in the previous year, and examines efficiency as well as effectiveness. Financial considerations also impinge on the construction phase.

The School Improvement Process

Purkey and Smith (1983) speculate on the strategies necessary to mobilise their organisation-structure and process variables. Fullan (1985) takes this approach further with a 'model' of the school improvement process that links eight organisation factors and four process factors to improvement, which he defines as achievement of goals, sense of community and meaning and capacity for improvement. His eight organisation variables of effective schools comprise:

1. Instructionally focused leadership.
2. District support.
3. Emphasis on curriculum and instruction.
4. Clear goals and high expectations for students.
5. A system for monitoring performance and achievement.
6. Ongoing staff development
7. Parental involvement and support.
8. Orderly and secure climate.

These are blended with *"four fundamental factors that in my view underlie successful improvement processes"* (p. 400):

1. Leadership feel for the improvement process.
2. A guiding value system.
3. Intense interaction and communication.
4. Collaborative planning and implementation, through central initiation and direction coupled with school-based analysis and decision-making.

This 'model' blends school effectiveness and school improvement findings. Fullan also recommends a plan for school districts that wish to embark on school-wide efforts, that incorporates elements of the school-based development process but provides for external facilitators and resources, ongoing staff and leadership development, and focuses on instruction and its link to organisation conditions. Elsewhere, Fullan looks at school improvement through a different screen.

Interactive Professionalism - Guidelines for Action

Based on their premise that *"there can be no improvement without the teacher"* (p. 63), Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) recommend a redefinition of teachers' roles and working conditions. They offer 12 'interactive professionalism' guidelines for teachers which they view as the foundation for lasting school improvement:

1. Locate, listen to and articulate your inner voice, through reflection on personal beliefs and values.
2. Reflection in, on and about action, through incorporation of collaboration, peer observation and feedback, and understanding of purposes and principles through reading, professional discussions, support groups and teacher research.
3. Develop a risk-taking mentality through trying a new practice and 'taking the first step'.

4. Trust processes through shared decision-making, communication, problem-solving, and continuous enquiry.
5. Appreciate the total person in working with others through professional recognition of many routes to teacher development, and personal sensitivity to other people's circumstances.
6. Commit to working with colleagues.
7. Seek variety and avoid balkanisation through sensitivity to the whole culture of the school.
8. Redefine your role to include responsibilities outside the classroom.
9. Balance work and life through avoidance of further overload.
10. Push and support principals and other administrators to develop interactive professionalism.
11. Commit to continuous improvement and perpetual learning, through demonstration of openness to learning and contribution to others' learning.
12. Monitor and strengthen the connections between your development and students' development through measurement of important outcomes.

These guidelines recognise the importance of the teacher to school improvement and, inherently, support the basic idea within school effectiveness that what people do within schools makes a difference. Unlike the previous process, however, no guidance is given for specific development efforts.

In a final school improvement framework, Joyce (1991) describes five different doors offered by proponents of school improvement. Traditionally, he believes, schools have selected one door through which they will enter into *"a passageway into the culture of the school"* (p. 59). The five doors are:

1. Collegiality - the development of cohesive and professional relations within and beyond schools.
2. Research - the study of school and instructional effectiveness findings.
3. Site-specific information - the collection and analysis of data about the school and its students.
4. Curriculum initiatives - the introduction of curricular or cross-curricular changes.
5. Instructional initiatives - the study of teaching skills and strategies, through staff development.

Joyce argues that adherence to one approach alone is inadequate, and that major school improvement efforts need to open all the doors. As Hopkins (1991) cautions, however, the opening of any of these doors without attention to the deeper culture and organisational conditions of the school, *"leads only into a cul-de-sac"* (p. 60). It appears that a blend of the four approaches reviewed above, added to an understanding both of the change process and of the perspectives on change, would provide a comprehensive approach to change.

Conclusion

While school effectiveness research demonstrates a greater orientation to model formation to represent its theoretical underpinnings, the school improvement researchers tend towards processes and guidelines that reflect its more practical orientation. It is notable that only recently have more comprehensive school effectiveness models appeared that begin to recognise the process and context implications of school effectiveness. There is room for further models of school effectiveness, but these must pay attention to the practical needs of educators and the processes of school improvement researchers.

Attempts to Link School Effectiveness and School Improvement

Initial efforts in North America to implement findings from school effectiveness research were unsuccessful because, as Lezotte (1989a) comments:

> *". . .the effective schools research provided a vision of a more desirable place for schools to be, but gave little insight as to how best to make the journey to that place"* (p. 819).

Three problems characterised these efforts (Lezotte, 1989a). First, they were mandated by central offices and perceived as 'top-down' reform efforts. Second, principals, who lacked an understanding of change, were responsible for 'making their schools effective'. Consequently, third, teachers perceived the process as an administrative mechanism to imply that they were not doing their best, which led to a lack of commitment.

School effectiveness research findings have continued to provide a base for effective schools programmes throughout the United States. In 1988, schools in 41 per cent of the nation's school districts (approximately 6500) were engaged in such projects (General Accounting Office, 1989), half of which were mandated, the other half voluntary. While the majority (83%)

of the districts evaluated their programmes based on achievement tests, three quarters used nontest measure that included grades, attendance, and enrollment rates in special classes. Only a minority regularly disaggregated their results to examine differences between socio-economic and ethnic groups (12% and 9% respectively).

Within the last few years, there has been a concerted attempt within the United States to incorporate understandings from school improvement into school effectiveness projects (Blum and Butler, 1987; Lezotte, 1989a. 1989b; Chrispeels and Pollack, 1990; Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Holcomb, 1991; Plitt, 1991; Taylor and Levine, 1991; Bamburg and Medina, 1991). Case studies (Taylor, 1990) illustrate the attempts of various districts and an educational resource centre to use the effective schools model. Their stories are positive and detailed. However, as Hopkins (1990c) notes in a review, most of these are small districts, all volunteered to 'tell their story', and they lack clarity about the precise nature of the process that leads to effectiveness. When combined with guidelines for school improvement and unresolved issues described by Levine and Lezotte (1990), the case studies provide a clearer idea of school effectiveness projects in the United States. They do not, however, provide a detailed description over a long period of how the effectiveness projects blended with everything else that happened in the districts.

Elsewhere, there have been varied attempts to implement school effectiveness projects. For example, in Canada, one school in Calgary, Ian Bazalgette Junior High, incorporated the characteristics identified in Fifteen Thousand Hours (Rutter et al., 1979) into a successful plan for school improvement (Toews and Murray Barker, 1985). In Australia, schools in Victoria focus both on state requirements for minimal standards in literacy and numeracy (from Edmonds, 1979), yet make school-level decisions regarding programmes to reach these standards (Townsend, 1992). Australia is also engaged in a country-wide Effective Schools Project (McGaw et al., 1991) in which all schools have been introduced to the definition and characteristics of effective schools through printed materials and video presentations. Schools have been invited to submit their ideas of school effectiveness which will then be summarised and will provide the basis for distribution of money to schools for improvement projects. This project, however, suffers from a lack of incorporation of school improvement and change process knowledge.

In Britain, until recently, there have been few attempts to base school improvement efforts on what was known about effective schools. In one effort, disappointing results occurred when consultancy methods were

used to bring school effectiveness knowledge into ineffective schools (Reynolds, 1987). Similarly, the 'Inspectors Based in Schools' initiative of the Inner London Education Authority used directive approaches to bring good practice to ineffective schools (Reynolds, 1989). In a follow-up to Fifteen Thousand Hours (Rutter et al., 1979), the researchers worked with some of the project schools to explore the possibility of change in some of the study's key result areas. While a liaison teacher was designated to work with the researchers, changes were not widespread (Ouston et al., 1991).

Two recent projects have attempted to bridge the divide between the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms. In Wales, Reynolds et al. (1989b) introduced school effectiveness knowledge to school participants, usually in senior management positions, who examined problems within their own context and carried out school-based studies. They were encouraged to liaise with school colleagues and the programme leaders provided follow-up support. Essentially, the participants became change agents within their own schools. Follow-up evaluations demonstrated ownership of organisation changes, commitment to the programmes from sponsoring authorities, and professional growth on the part of participants. Institutional changes had occurred in over three-quarters of participants' schools, and 85 per cent had been maintained in a six-year follow-up study. Furthermore, pupil outcomes were enhanced.

In a recently started project, Hopkins and Ainscow (in press) have blended methods and approaches from the two paradigms. The project is oriented towards pupil outcomes and also involves measurement of programme success or failure that includes school process factors. School and instructional effectiveness knowledge is incorporated into school projects, although the basis for the change strategies and professional development is school improvement knowledge.

Conclusion

From this review, it is clear that there has been an evolution in the use of school effectiveness research from top-down approaches to recent efforts that attempt to take into account the school improvement and change knowledge bases.

Features of the Two Paradigms Necessary for a Merger

From all of the features outlined in the review, it appears that while there are some basic differences, the two research traditions complement each other, and shortcomings of each approach are counterbalanced by the strengths of the other. In order for closer links to be made between the two paradigms, the following key features would need to be incorporated from each.

Key School Effectiveness Features

1. A focus on outcomes, to include a broad range of academic and social pupil outcomes, and teacher and organisational outcomes.
2. An emphasis on equity, both in school and classroom processes and data gathered to assess the current situation and impact on pupil outcomes.
3. The use of data for decision-making concerning needs for school improvement. This would include disaggregation, to establish whether different student groups' needs have been met.
4. A knowledge of what is effective elsewhere. Research findings in accessible forms that will provide a knowledge base to add to practitioner experience.
5. An understanding that the school is the focus of change. Given schools' unique population and context, they need to be responsible for their own change efforts.

Key School Improvement Features

1. A focus on process. The interplay of process with the characteristics identified by school effectiveness research needs to be better understood.
2. An orientation towards action and ongoing development. The emphasis needs to be on problem-solving and ongoing learning. Increased study of change dynamics and their impact will help to understand the complexity of schools.
3. An emphasis on school-selected development priorities, that incorporates teacher involvement, ownership, and the establishment of improvement goals.
4. The importance of a focus on curriculum and instruction. An understanding of school organisation and its underlying processes may not be sufficient to engage teachers' interest or commitment.

5. A view of the school as the centre of change that is connected with its external context. Within this, the school district needs to provide appropriate support to schools.
6. Ongoing staff development, both from within and outside the school, with a focus on both the process and content of school improvement efforts.

One further concept is needed in a link between school effectiveness and school improvement; the importance of understanding school culture has been referred to briefly in both reviews and has a powerful impact on change efforts. It underlies the promotion of collaboration and trust, the taking of risks, and continuous learning. As such, it should be a key feature of school improvement efforts.

Summary

Given the features described above, a blend of the two paradigms in a comprehensive school effectiveness project would need to: examine, discuss, and incorporate school effectiveness findings; use school improvement processes and development strategies; emphasise the unique context of the school and the importance of its culture; focus on curriculum and instruction; ensure links with the district and outside agencies; and evaluate its impact in terms of teacher development and the quality and equity of student progress, development and achievement on a diverse array of relevant outcome measures.

Research Questions

In order to understand better the potential of linking school effectiveness and school improvement, this research examined a multi-year school effectiveness project in a large Canadian school district. Because the Project started in 1986, before much of the research discussed in this chapter was available, the research was based on the following key questions:

1. What is the change process that occurs when a school district implements a school effectiveness initiative?
2. What is the impact of such a school effectiveness initiative on the district and its schools?
3. What are the differences - process and impact - between elementary and secondary schools?

In Chapter 2 the methodology of this research and its rationale are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

In this chapter, the methodological procedures, design and rationale of this research are discussed. The chapter begins, however, with a description of the research opportunity and its setting.

The Research Opportunity

Since 1984, the Halton Board of Education had been interested in the topic of school effectiveness. The Elementary Principals' (Headteachers') Association had taken this as the theme for its annual conferences, and in 1985 invited the principal author of School Matters (the Junior School Project) (Mortimore et al., 1988) to address the principals on its findings. It was at this time that a year's exchange was planned between a vice principal (deputy head) from Halton and a member of the Junior School Project team. The system administrators had an implicit theory that British and American school effectiveness research had not only shown that schools do make a difference but, more importantly, had been able to identify for them factors which enhance a school's effectiveness. They saw it as a challenge for educators to translate the research findings into day-to-day practice. Furthermore, the board had a long-term commitment to the improvement of its schools, and had a reputation amongst the local school districts for its interest in organisational, leadership and staff development.

The role of the researcher was to work with a task force to apply the findings of School Matters and other applicable school effectiveness research through an Effective Schools Project. In particular, she would be expected to make herself available to six elementary (primary) and three secondary pilot schools to help them monitor the progress and outcomes of their improvement efforts.

At the end of the year's exchange, the board committed itself to continue with the Project, and invited the researcher to return to Halton on a more permanent basis. This afforded the researcher the opportunity to be involved in the development of the Project from its inception and to carry out a systematic study relating the work of school effectiveness to school improvement.

The Setting

The Halton Board of Education, located 30 miles west of Toronto on the north shore of Lake Ontario, serves 44,000 students in 65 elementary schools and 16 secondary schools. Over the last six years the population has not changed greatly, although certain areas have grown considerably, leading to the opening of five new elementary schools and projections for a new secondary school in 1994. In other areas, however, there has been a decline that has caused the closure of two elementary schools and one secondary school. The catchment area of Halton's schools, which is 15 miles from west to east and 30 miles from north to south, encompasses large and small towns along with several more rural areas. The range of social class backgrounds is narrower than that within Inner London. Nonetheless, there is a good range, with the area of Oakville being one of the most affluent in Canada, whereas Acton, in the north, is a relatively poor farming community. In recent years, several large businesses have expressed an interest in moving their headquarters to Burlington or Oakville, two towns with populations of 150,000 and 100,000 respectively, although the recession that is being felt throughout the world has also taken its toll on these two areas.

Until very recently, the population has been predominantly of British or Western European extraction. In the last two years, however, the eastern area, in particular, has seen an influx of immigrants from Iran, East India, Poland and Japan. Consequently, the profiles of ethno-cultural issues and English as a Second Language have been considerably enhanced. At the start of the research, however, this was not the case.

There are currently 2800 teaching staff in Halton. From the mid-1980s until 1990, there had been an infusion of new teachers, especially in the elementary panel. Due to the current economic situation, the teaching population has been stable, although significant turnover is expected from 1994 onwards due to retirements.

The Research Design

In the previous chapter, many studies of school effectiveness and school improvement were discussed. These included a few that attempted to blend the two paradigms. What they all lacked, however, was a detailed description of what it really looks like, over a period of time, when a system tries to implement a school effectiveness project. The context of this endeavour was bound by political influences, roles, power

relationships, and organisational structures. Within the system there was also a focus on leadership development and a lack of emphasis on standardised testing.

Although much is known about the characteristics of effectiveness and the complication of change efforts in schools, it is not easy to predict what will happen when a school effectiveness project is introduced into a school system with a well-defined history and unique context, as described above.

Based on the findings of research cited in the previous chapter, however, it is possible to speculate on some of the key processes and outcomes which one might expect would be related to the successful linkage of the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms (see Table 1).

Table 1
Some possible processes and outcomes of a school effectiveness/ school improvement project

Processes	Outcomes
School improvement plan School-based decision-making Teacher involvement Development of collaborative culture Development of shared values and beliefs Focus on instruction Staff development Emphasis on leadership System support Funding Assessment System reorganisation	Student progress Student achievement Student social development Change in teacher attitude Change in teacher behaviour Staff cohesion Change in power relationships System reorganisation

This table lists a number of items that have been cited by researchers and practitioners (for example, Mortimore et al., 1988; Lezotte, 1989b; Rosenholtz, 1989; Louis and Miles, 1990; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Joyce, 1991; Fullan, 1991a; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Ainscow and Hopkins, 1992). The processes include those that are concrete, for

example, a plan, staff development, funding and assessment, and also abstract issues of culture and shared beliefs and values. The outcomes are of two kinds. The first emphasise student activity; the second, institutional changes within the school and system.

Table 1 poses several issues to be addressed in the research design.

1. What are Acceptable Outcomes?

One of the difficulties of creating a model of school improvement, even one linked to school effectiveness research, is that it is not possible to predict exactly what the outcomes of such a project might be. School effectiveness research findings are based on schools at a particular point in time and describe this through pupil outcome data. In the United States the focus has almost exclusively been on achievement in basic skill areas. In Britain, it has been broader, incorporating social as well as academic outcomes. Neither, however, has focused in sufficient depth on the processes that the school went through to arrive at this stage, nor on the changes to other people in the school or system, particularly teachers, that might be necessary before pupil benefits can be evaluated.

Because of this Project's evolution over five years, as well as the unique context in which it took place, it was of considerable importance to examine the processes of change and their progress, as well as Project outcomes. Whether processes can and should be considered as indicators of effectiveness in their own right is a crucial issue which will be discussed in Chapter 10. Furthermore, given the link between teacher and school improvement (Fullan et al., 1990; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991), it was also vital to examine some of the intermediate outcomes that might, ultimately, be expected to lead to student progress, achievement and development. Therefore, teacher attitudes to issues raised by school effectiveness research as well as their beliefs surrounding the school improvement process in their schools were of considerable importance.

2. What processes are most effective?

As with any research, a second issue arising out of Table 1 is that the researcher cannot be sure which of the many processes employed by the system and schools will lead to positive outcomes. Ideally, the researcher would wish to study all processes, but this would be impossible. If, however, she chose to restrict herself to the study of only certain processes, how could she guarantee it was these, and not others, that

influenced the outcome? (Causality is discussed later in this chapter.) Realistically, she would have to gamble on which processes to examine, basing her choice on previous research and practitioner knowledge. The implications of this for the research were that it would be important to select a design that would allow for the examination of strategies directly and indirectly related to the Project, and would enable the researcher to re-look at strategies earlier thought to be insignificant.

3. What is a process and what is an outcome?

A third issue related to Table 1 is the difficulty in separation of processes and outcomes. Thus, for example, reorganisation of a school system could be viewed as a process to achieve a variety of pupil, teacher and school outcomes. Equally, the change involved in the reorganisation of a school system could be perceived as an outcome of other events that led up to it (this is further discussed later in this chapter).

Another unrelated issue, but one to be considered in the research design, was the role of the researcher herself. As a member of the Task Force, she was not in a position to direct the course of the Project. More importantly, however, as a researcher trying to document the Project, it would have been inappropriate to influence it so directly. Thus, it was her role to be responsive to the timing and requests of the system and schools, and to collect data when appropriate to their needs.

All of the issues had to be incorporated into a flexible research design. Given that this research was, therefore, not the result of a contrived experimental study but, rather, arose out of a real-life, developmental system-wide school improvement project, it would have been inappropriate to overlay a tight research design. Thus, a more flexible approach was selected: that of an emerging design, to mirror the Project itself.

Because of the uncertainty regarding key variables in this research, a variety of data sources was needed to explore all of the ideas and pull out the key themes. A mixed design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods was selected. These included:

1. **Case study**: An historical descriptive case study of the school system from 1986 to 1991 (Yin, 1989; Merriam, 1991), with an emphasis on the operation of the Task Force, staff development, assessment, and a variety of implementation strategies.

2. **Effective schools questionnaire**: Quantitative data collected through a questionnaire, designed to measure the school effectiveness characteristics and their level of importance and implementation.

3. **Interviews:** Structured interviews with teachers in elementary and secondary schools, to create case profiles to enhance the understanding of the change process at school level.

A description of each of these data collection procedures follows.

Case Study

The case study is described by Wilson (1979) as a process:

> *"which tries to describe and analyze some entity in qualitative, complex and comprehensive terms not infrequently as it unfolds over a period of time"* (p. 448).

According to Merriam (1991) case studies: focus on a specific situation; provide a rich, 'lifelike' description; bring the reader to greater understanding of the situation; and largely depend on inductive reasoning, as tentative hypotheses may be reformulated when new relationships are discovered.

In order to capture the evolution of this Project, it was felt that a chronological, descriptive account would provide the best fit, and would enable the reader to understand better the aspects of the Project that were easily implemented, those that required more time, and some that appeared to defy implementation.

Just as school effectiveness research has demonstrated that schools have unique contexts (see previous chapter), so do school districts. The case study approach further allowed a penetration into one specific institution and its approach to change or, as Cronbach (1975) refers to it, *"interpretation in context"* (p. 123).

This case study examined how the Halton Board, and more specifically a task force within the district, operationalised a plan to enhance its schools and pupils' outcomes through use of school effectiveness research findings. It focused particularly on initiation, implementation and institutionalisation strategies, although it quickly became clear that the plan was fluid and developmental, as changes were made to meet the needs of schools.

Although the case study featured the work of the district as its main focus, in line with the research questions identified at the end of the previous chapter, case profiles and brief vignettes of elementary and secondary schools provided illustrations of the Project in action at school level.

Yin (1989) specifies six sources of evidence for case studies: documents; archival records; interviews, whether open-ended or focused; direct observation; participant observation; and physical artifacts. He also stresses the importance of the use of more than one source of evidence.

Data sources for this case study drew particularly from three sets of evidence: a review of documents, specifically notes, minutes from meetings, and developed booklets, handouts and outlines; ongoing participant observations; and informal interviews in schools.

Inevitably, there are disadvantages to the case study approach. In this instance, time and cost were not issues because most of the research was perceived as part of the researcher's job, thus she was able to carry out the data collection as part of her regular work schedule. The bias, sensitivity and integrity of the researcher, along with ethics, reliability, validity and generalisability must also, however, be considered (Merriam, 1991). Of researcher involvement, Merriam (1991) cautions:

> *"The researcher must also be aware of the extent to which his or her presence is changing what is being observed - including the changes taking place within the investigator"* (p. 181).

Certainly it might have been difficult for the researcher to be impartial given that she was also part of the implementation team and, therefore, jointly responsible for the success of the Project. As a newcomer to the district, however, she had more of an outsider's perspective which she strove to maintain. Furthermore, given her interest in and previous experience with research, it was important for her to follow the process and outcomes of the Project in an impartial manner, however they might turn out. (See Chapter 10 for further discussion of this issue.)

To acknowledge and deal with the other issues, the researcher gained permission from the senior administration to study and write about the district (Stoll, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, in press), and, on an ongoing basis, shared her interpretations with the superintendent heading the Task

Force, with whom she collaborated on several presentations and articles that described the district and its Project (Stoll and Fink, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1992a, 1992b; Fink and Stoll, 1992). She has also endeavoured to provide sufficient information about the board and its context such that the reader might be able to generalise any findings to similar districts.

Effectiveness Schools Questionnaire

Given its emphasis on the process of school effectiveness and the interest in the characteristics identified by school effectiveness and improvement research (see Chapter 3), in 1992 it was agreed that a questionnaire should be developed for three key purposes:

1. As part of the school growth planning process, to help schools assess their current state before they made future plans for improvement.

2. As a vehicle for staff development, through which teachers would become familiar with the research findings on school effectiveness.

3. To examine teacher perceptions throughout the system to the school growth planning process and the theoretical body of knowledge that underpinned it, as a measure of the impact of this Project (see Chapter 4 for a description of the school growth plan).

Development of the Questionnaire

As the researcher carried out preliminary work on the design of the questionnaire, she was faced with various issues related to questionnaire development. These were mainly concerned with length, content, order and purpose, and are discussed below.

The researcher examined several similar questionnaires, developed in other jurisdictions, and found them to be lengthy with an average of 150 items. Nonetheless, it would not be possible to design a very short survey that would cover all of the areas in adequate depth. A conflict thus existed between having an ideal instrument long enough to cover all relevant questions, and the practical realities of teachers who have little time to complete surveys. Therefore, a compromise would have to be reached, such that the number of items would be acceptable and would produce the maximum response, and yet would provide a true reflection of the range

of the topic. This issue is of particular relevance in a study of this nature; a systematic investigation carried out within a practitioner context.

Some of the questionnaires used elsewhere had a strong emphasis on the issue of equity which, although of extreme importance to school effectiveness, was not to be the major focus of these questionnaires. Nonetheless, it was decided that a small number of items should be designed to address this issue. The remainder would focus on the criteria outlined by the Task Force and based on school effectiveness research. This is important to bear in mind in consideration of the instruments' validity. They were constructed for use with a specific population, Halton schools, and were related to the work that had been done in this particular school board over a period of years. Since their development, the researcher has been requested many times to share the questionnaires with researchers and practitioners in other school districts in Canada, Britain and elsewhere. Although she has been willing to do so, she always reminds people that they were designed for a particular population to aid planning and to measure the effects of a specific project. She recommends that other users may wish to amend them to suit their own purposes.

Most of the questionnaires used elsewhere were compiled with questions assigned in a random order, although a few were compartmentalised under a heading. As it was felt that the questionnaires might be useful as a means to give information to people concerning school effectiveness, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to group related items and identify each section with a heading. It is realised that this could have an impact on the way respondents answer each item (Babbie, 1973). Nonetheless, the staff development purpose of the questionnaires was seen to be as important as that concerned with data collection. Furthermore, the instruments were to be developed primarily to provide schools with information for growth planning. The headings, therefore, would play a role in helping schools to identify broader areas of need.

To give schools maximum information for goal-setting purposes it was thought that the questionnaires should address future vision as well as present perceptions. Thus, they were developed such that each item would be rated on two scales. The first would focus on the respondents' rate of agreement with the item as it reflected their school at the current time. This was the traditional, Likert-type five-point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The second would ask the respondents to rate the item in terms of its importance in the creation of an effective school. Also using five points (critical, very important, fairly important, not very important, and not at all important), this scale would not allow the respondents to choose uncertainty.

Through a gap analysis between what the respondents believed to be important compared with what they perceived to be happening in their school at the present time, it would be possible to establish areas of greater and lesser need.

A first draft of the teacher questionnaire contained 85 items that were divided into 15 sections: the three broad areas of common mission, emphasis on learning, and climate conducive to learning; and the 12 characteristics incorporated within these areas. The elementary and secondary versions were identical, except for the area on instructional leadership. On advice from secondary principals and heads of departments, certain issues were deemed to be the responsibility of department heads as well as the principal, for example supervision of teachers. Hence, the wording on the secondary questionnaire reflected this point.

The questionnaires were circulated to the director, all superintendents, and a selection of principals, department heads and teachers, as well as representatives of the teachers' federations. Comments and amendments were invited, as were deletions with regard to overlap.

Pilot of the Questionnaire

The version eventually piloted had 82 items. One secondary and one elementary school piloted the questionnaires in the spring of 1990. The findings of the pilot are summarised below:

- The items on the importance scale did not differentiate between the teacher respondents. The reason for this was that most people felt that all of the items were important in order to create an effective school. Given that this was developed as a tool for planning, this was not perceived to be a weakness in the instrument. Rather, if there was some disparity between the responses on the two scales, it would demonstrate a need for improvement in certain areas because teachers felt that these areas were important and yet were not being adequately addressed.

- On the elementary survey, the items on the agreement scale also did not discriminate between the respondents, because a very high level of satisfaction was expressed with most items. Two additional sets of information helped to clarify this situation. First, informal discussions with people closely associated with the elementary school confirmed that it was, indeed, one of the more successful schools in Halton, staffed by teachers who were interested to improve what they did but were also pleased with their current level of success. The second information source was the result of the secondary survey, which was considerably less positive. This demonstrated that schools do vary with regard to teacher responses to the effective schools survey and, indeed, was an early indicator of the differences between elementary and secondary school results, as discussed in Chapter 9.

- The researcher asked the two pilot schools to request teachers to make comments on the items if they had difficulty answering them. None were made, and on an examination of the response patterns, there were no items that were left unmarked by more than a couple of people. Items missed by several people might have demonstrated confusion regarding an item.

It was agreed that the survey could be made available for other schools' use in its present form (see Chapter 6, Appendix A for copies of the teacher surveys and Appendix B for reliability tests and further discussion of reliability and validity).

Use of the Questionnaire at System Level

It was decided that the questionnaire should be used on a sample of teachers across the system to ascertain the progress of the Project; that is, whether the language of school effectiveness and school growth planning was a reality throughout the system, and whether teachers believed that their schools were engaged in activities that complemented the school effectiveness characteristics. It would also identify system needs and provide a baseline against which future progress could be assessed.

This occurred at a time when senior administration were particularly interested in the evaluation of a variety of curriculum and organisational initiatives. There was some concern that the teachers would become overburdened with surveys that they would ultimately refuse to complete. Rather than risk a low return rate, it was agreed that a different 20 per

cent sample be used for each of these surveys, so that no teacher would be requested to complete more than one. The names of teachers who would complete this questionnaire were selected by starting with the third name on each school's staff list and counting every fifth name after that. Based on a plus or minus 5 per cent error rate, this produced a sufficient sample to generalise to the rest of the teaching population, as well as being a convenient means of sample selection.

The administration of the questionnaire took place at the end of January 1991 in elementary schools and the beginning of March 1991 in secondary schools. These dates were set according to the wishes of the two principals' associations. The end of January in Halton secondary schools is a busy time as the school year is divided into two halves and the first term has just ended. At this time teachers are involved in examination marking and preparation for the second term. Secondary principals, therefore, did not feel that it would be a good time for the administration of the questionnaire. Early March was preferred, once students and teachers had settled into the second term.

Interviews

Over the period of the Project, various schools approached the researcher and requested that she help them monitor their school growth planning process. In Spring 1990, in response to such a request she developed an interview protocol for secondary teachers in two schools, whom she interviewed in June and October 1990 respectively, to ascertain their reactions to the process in their schools and its level of implementation. The interview questions were discussed with the principals before being used. Interviews were also carried out in three elementary schools in June 1991. The interview schedule was elaborated at this time to include more questions that related to the school effectiveness questionnaire items (see Appendix C1 for copy of the interview schedule). Again, the interview questions were discussed with the three principals prior to use.

Interviews were carried out with 20 per cent of the staff in each of the five schools, and with the school's principal (see Appendix C2 for copy of the principal's interview schedule). The 20 per cent sample was randomly selected then checked for representation of all relevant groups. Randomly chosen replacements were substituted where necessary. The percentage to be interviewed was selected to meet the needs of the principals who had offered to arrange for cover of classes of interviewees. The elementary principals all covered some of the classes themselves. Although the

samples were not officially large enough to generalise to the entire staff, the responses were sufficiently consistent to give principals an indication of staff opinion that they could probe further if desired. Reports were written for all schools and were sent first to the interviewees to verify and ensure that anonymity and confidentiality had not been breached before being sent to the principal to share more widely. A summary report of the findings of the three elementary schools was also written, and has been distributed throughout the system as a resource document to help principals in their planning and support staff who assist them.

The three elementary schools and one of the secondary schools also opted for their entire staff to complete the school effectiveness questionnaire when it was offered to schools in early 1991. The other secondary school, with a very large staff, participated in the system-wide sample of 20 per cent of its staff. The limitation of a 20 per cent sample must be recognised. However, these teachers, like those from the other four schools, were among the most positive in terms of their perceptions when compared with schools that catered to a similar age group.

Interview data from teachers and principals, along with questionnaire data from individual schools, provided a more detailed picture of school growth planning and teachers' perceptions of the process within these particular schools. This information was used to build two case profiles, one elementary, the other secondary, to illustrate the questionnaire results at school level (see Appendices D1 and D2).

Predictable Difficulties in the Halton Project

Certain issues arise as a result of the chosen research design and are discussed below.

1. Lack of Student Achievement Data

No pre-test data were collected because Ontario does not have a history of standardised testing, and Task Force members were loath to import tests that bore no relation to what the students learned at school.

Furthermore, as subsequent chapters demonstrate, the whole area of assessment and evaluation was something of a mystery to many people in Halton who might have been described as 'assessment illiterate' (Stiggins, 1991). Indeed, there was some anxiety over assessment. The staff development focus was seen, therefore, as more easily approachable than the evaluation of outcomes: that is, the professionalisation of

teaching and involvement of teachers in decision-making and goal-setting.

As discussed earlier, there is an issue over what constitutes an outcome. The outcomes presented in this research were related to process (for example, implementation of school growth planning, and an increase in teacher involvement in decision-making) and intermediate outcomes (for example, teacher attitudes and institutional change) and should be viewed from this perspective. Given the nature of the Project, one could even question whether it would be appropriate to measure this type of change at a system level using standardised achievement results (see Chapter 10), although, clearly, each school should be able to measure its own success with its curricular and instructional goals through appropriate assessments.

2. The Issue of Causality

To expand on the previous issue, an example is given of the information collected within Halton on dropouts over a period of years. This has occurred in response to a concern regarding the social as well as academic outcomes of schooling. The dropout rate has decreased from nine to five per cent from 1987 to 1991. It would be difficult, however, to assert that the decrease in dropouts is as a result of this Project alone, although the emphasis on students in lower level courses has been a chosen goal of many of the secondary schools' growth plans, and is strongly linked to school effectiveness through its equity focus. Connections between process and outcomes, therefore, are not easy to draw. Indeed, although relationships might be hypothesised among issues in this research, there is no foundation to imply causality.

3. Lack of On-Going Focus on Individual Schools

The main focus of this research is not on the schools although they are at the heart of the research and several appear in vignettes or through case profiles. The reason for this is that, although case studies of schools undergoing change efforts are not common, there are several detailed accounts (for example, Toews and Murray Barker, 1985; Louis and Miles, 1990; Nias et al., 1989; Taylor, 1990). In contrast, district improvement attempts related to school effectiveness have not been charted over an extended period. Furthermore, Hallinger (1991), in a review of Coleman and LaRocque's (1990) study of the role of 10 school districts in school improvement, comments:

> *"the inclusion of 10 school districts . . . makes it somewhat difficult to develop a sense of the individual districts"* (p. 250).

This research attempted to get under the surface of an individual district over a period of time as it worked through a particular initiative. The chronological approach was selected over a thematic approach because it was felt it better illustrated Fullan's (1982) maxim, 'change is a process, not an event'. Essentially, systemwide change takes time, requires patience, and has a tendency to evolve rather than adhere strictly to a preplanned agenda.

4. The Problem of Chronology

A difficulty of this study was the separation of processes and outcomes, with a consequent impact on the chronology of this case study. Thus, for example, the system's reorganisation was included by the researcher within the description of the Project's progress, as part of the ongoing process to support school growth planning (see Chapters 5 and 6), and was certainly perceived as such by people in the system. Equally, it could be seen as an outcome of this Project, as well as of various other initiatives within the system at the same time. Similarly, school growth planning was a process developed by the Task Force to help schools activate findings of school effectiveness research. As such, it appeared within the system case study chapters (see Chapter 4). From the schools' perspective, however, as well as being a process, it was also considered to be an outcome of the Task Force's work. Choices were made by the researcher to include reorganisation and school growth planning within the Halton case study of implementation and institutionalisation processes, but she perceived them as both processes and outcomes. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 10.

A further problem with chronology relates to the timing of data collection. For example, the interviews and administration of surveys in the case profile schools occurred at slightly different times in the elementary and secondary schools, to suit the individual school's convenience. Nonetheless, they were all carried out within the period of one school year (October 1990 to June 1991). Given that the issues uncovered in the case profiles are consistent irrespective of the method or sequence of data collection, the researcher was able to use a thematic approach to report these results (see Appendices D1 and D2). What is key, however, is that the questionnaire and interview data used within the research to measure

the Project's impact on teacher attitudes were developed for the schools and system as needed.

5. Lack of 'Neat' Research Design

A potential stumbling block and awkward detail of this research, but also an inevitable offshoot of the Project, was that the instruments were designed specifically for it. In other words, the research was not carried out by an external researcher, but by one whose key function was to respond to the needs of schools. This is the reality of school improvement research. It is not possible to put complete constraints on a system that would change the natural school improvement process. This explains anomalies in the design, methodology and sequence of the research.

In summary, the Halton Board's Effective Schools Project evolved over a period of years. As researcher and consultant to the Project, the district's and schools' needs for measurement had to be met and instruments had to emerge to match the organic growth of the Project and its participants' readiness. This may be perceived as a weakness of both the Project and the research, but could equally be considered as a strength in its attention to 'bringing people on board'. Essentially, this Project focused as much on the process of school improvement as its outcomes. Consequently, both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were appropriate. Many previous studies of school effectiveness and school improvement have suffered from an over-reliance on one approach or the other. Furthermore, traditionally, school improvement researchers criticise school effectiveness researchers for their large-scale, inhuman, 'number crunching', quantitative orientation, while school effectiveness researchers are unimpressed by the more process-oriented qualitative, case-study approach taken by improvement researchers. Given that the Project in Halton quickly became a deliberate attempt to blend these two fields of enquiry, it is fitting that both types of methodology should be incorporated into this research. Thus, this research represents a unique opportunity to investigate a district-wide school improvement effort based on school effectiveness research.

Organisation of the Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is divided into three main sections. In the first, Chapters 3 to 6, the results of a chronological case study of the initiation, implementation, institutionalisation and consolidation of Halton's Effective Schools Project from 1986 until 1991 are given. These chapter titles reflect the change process phases outlined in the previous

chapter. System-level results are also incorporated within Chapters 5 and 6.

Within the second section, the Project's impact on the attitudes of Halton's elementary and secondary teachers is examined in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively, through the results of effective schools questionnaires administered throughout the system. In Chapter 9 commonalities and differences in perception between the two groups of teachers are analysed.

Issues discussed throughout this chapter and others will form the substance of the final section. Chapter 10 consists of a critical discussion of all of the issues that have surfaced during the research, and is arranged thematically. Chapter 11 concludes with implications of the research for the link between school effectiveness and school improvement. First, however, the story of Halton's Effective Schools Project must unfold, and that commences in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Initiation (1986-87)

When the researcher arrived in Halton in September 1986, The Board of Education had just supported the creation of a Task Force to enhance the quality of the system and schools' performance through the application of the characteristics of effective schools. With this as its original mandate, the Project has since taken on many different directions. This work culminated in a reorganisation of the entire system to support school-based decision-making focused upon the characteristics of effective schools.

The focus of this chapter is the initiation phase of Halton's Effective Schools Project. The role of the Task Force is first outlined, followed by the conceptual framework of their task, its relationship to the change process, and the influence of school effectiveness research. The second half of the chapter describes the work in the pilot schools, the plan that evolved, and its early impact within other schools. The chapter concludes with two vignettes that illustrate the process in schools, followed by a summary of the year's work and some implications for the next school year.

The Role of the Effective Schools Task Force

Business organisations frequently use task forces to solve problems and generate strategies for development (Lippitt and Lippitt, 1986). In the 1980s in the education world, it was becoming more common that central office leaders, *"both individually and in collaboration with those around them, should think through and develop some procedures for change"* (Fullan, 1985, p. 405).

Halton's Task Force was composed of three secondary and six elementary principals, the coordinators of curriculum and special education, a superintendent (inspector) and a researcher. The nine schools with which the principals were affiliated became pilot schools where the Task Force's deliberations were translated into practice. Over the three years the Task Force operated, some principals moved to other schools and one transferred into a staff development role. By the summer of 1989, therefore, the number of official pilot schools had increased to 12, although by this time many other schools in the system were also involved.

There are several pitfalls associated with task forces (Lippitt and Lippitt, 1986). These include: the selection of broad representation to satisfy political needs, rather than those people who best meet the needs of the task; mandatory rather than voluntary participation; the creation of overload on the part of the members; and an assumption that a group of people selected to work together are able and prepared to do so. In Halton, many of these issues surfaced. Some were dealt with more successfully than others.

The superintendent who formed the Task Force had to choose between the selection of a large group with broader membership or a smaller group. The advantages of the former would be its representative nature through involvement of people in a variety of roles, and a broader based initial plan. The participation of representatives from all the federations (unions) within the system, however, would almost certainly extend the timelines for task completion, particularly if the group size was sufficiently large that participants became 'bogged down' in issues (Fullan, 1985). The small group of high-profile administrators and leaders who were finally selected for a three-year commitment was, therefore, seen by this superintendent as 'a calculated risk'. In retrospect, the choice appears to have been relatively successful, although the addition of carefully chosen teacher representatives might have balanced the membership and modelled the 'grass roots' participation that was much desired, and greater involvement of the curriculum department might have allayed later problems (see Chapters 5, 6 and 10). Participation, although by invitation, was voluntary. Difficulties associated with mandatory involvement, therefore, were not an issue. What is more, there was certainly an initial feeling of pride in having been chosen to be a member of this group. This waned slightly after the second year, perhaps more due to decrease in the frequency of meetings and uncertainty with regard to the continuing role of the Task Force.

Other issues also surfaced over the three-year period. Little time initially was devoted to team-building, or to sharing the different experiences of members. Consequently, as the Task Force only met monthly or less frequently, it took a considerable time for shared values and a common language to develop. If the Project were to be repeated, the researcher would recommend a two-day initial meeting in a setting away from the school district, where the emphasis would be on development of group identity and cohesion.

The changing membership of the Task Force was a further influence on group cohesion. New members brought with them their own experiences

and agendas. In most instances, this enhanced the process of the group, through a broadening of perspective and addition of clarity to inadequately defined issues. Occasionally, however, a new person's ideas were somewhat different from those of the group and it required time and patience on the part of the other members to 'bring them on board'. Within schools, the related problem of staff and administrative turnover is a highly powerful factor that can have an adverse effect on change efforts (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977; Fullan, 1982).

Time constraints were certainly an influential factor on commitment to the Task Force. Every member, with exception of the researcher, had other major commitments that inevitably caused time conflicts with Task Force meetings.

Despite some of the difficulties outlined above, the Task Force generated some significant theories, plans and, subsequently, practical activities which, over a period of years, had a major impact upon the entire school system. Their work will now be described.

Establishing a Conceptual Framework for the Task

Although the system administrators were convinced of the utility of a school effectiveness model, the role of the Task Force was to create an actual framework for the system. Initially, the Task Force focused on organisational development, and noted that three major events occur annually in effective organisations (Odiorne, 1979): assessment; planning; and budgeting.

Assessment

Assessment determines an organisation's strengths, weaknesses and problems, as well as the risks, threats and opportunities that might affect it. It also helps an organisation to understand whether it is achieving its purpose efficiently and effectively; that is, whether it is doing things right and doing the right things. Traditionally in Halton, in attempting this task, some commercial standardised tests were used. These tests purported to measure achievement and ability, but most were based on American norms and bore little relation to what students learned in Halton schools. Furthermore, research demonstrates that children's ability can and does change over time (Mortimore et al., 1988). Fixed measures of intelligence are, therefore, inaccurate representations of students' ability. On the basis of Halton students' results on such tests,

however, a minority were further tested for giftedness, using other commercial assessments. Locally developed French and mathematics tests were also administered, as were some community surveys. Most of these assessments were somewhat 'ad hoc', and could only partially guide planning. In contrast, the goals of the Halton Board of Education for its students were considerably more diverse than just the attainment of academic skills (see Figure 1). It was inappropriate, therefore, that the focus of instruments to measure such a wide range of goals should be so narrow. The broader range of assessments used in the Junior School Project (Mortimore et al., 1986) was an example of a more realistic set of instruments to assess school outcomes, although many would not be appropriate for secondary students. A major task, therefore, would be to develop procedures to assess an appropriate range of outcomes and those factors which make a difference in a school and school system. As this study later demonstrates, it took a considerable amount of time to arrive at a set of measures and, even then, not all of the desired outcomes have yet been assessed. This will be discussed in Chapter 10.

Figure 1: The Halton Board's goals for students

HALTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Our Goals for Students

We strive for students to achieve to the best of their ability, the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to pursue useful and happy lives in an increasingly complex and changing world.

Our staff assist students to undertake activities which will:

- ***foster enjoyment of learning;***
- ***develop the knowledge and skills of communication, mathematics, social science, arts, and modern technology;***
- ***encourage independent and interdependent learning;***
- ***develop effective problem-solving and decision-making skills;***
- ***enhance physical fitness, health and environmental awareness;***
- ***promote understanding and appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen of Canada within the global community;***
- ***develop respect for individual differences, needs, rights and the properties of others;***
- ***promote a sense of self-worth and emotional well-being.***

Throughout the 1986-87 school year, however, investigations were carried out on the nature of data currently stored on the mainframe computer and its uses within the system. It was found that the information on the mainframe computer was used for administrative, rather than educational, purposes. Course data were not archived, and attendance information, although collected, was not stored on this mainframe.

Assessment discussions in the first year were largely philosophical. It was important to demonstrate to the Task Force that the nature of a school's intake had to be addressed in any examination of students' outcomes, and that a focus on progress, rather than achievement, would better distinguish between more and less effective schools (Mortimore et al., 1988). At this stage, no clear agreement on the nature of the assessment was reached, although this was viewed as an important task for the future.

Planning

Once assessment has identified areas for improvement, planning can proceed more effectively. At the start of the Project, Halton already had a long range planning process, whereby goals for the Board were outlined for a five-year period and were defined in detail each year for the following year. Many, although not all, schools and departments also followed this format. Most planning, however, conformed to the 'cardiac approach' (Glickman, 1989), whereby school goals and directions were based on gut reactions and feelings rather than the results of formal or informal data collection.

Another level of planning in the system involved the setting of objectives by individuals. This was achieved through 'Manager's Letters', a written commitment between each employee and his or her line manager, and an appraisal process entitled 'Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation'. One of the Task Force's aims was to provide ways to assess the system and its schools and, thus, to help school and individual planning become more purposeful and successful.

Budgeting

Halton's budget procedures had seen some changes in the years leading up to 1986. The priority process had been tightened, there was a trend towards decentralisation of the budget to schools, and closer liaison had also occurred among business and academic personnel. All of the above had contributed to more efficient use of funds. It was intended, however,

that the Effective Schools Project would help the system plan more precisely and spend its money on resources and staff development to support school effectiveness. At the time of writing, significant constraints have occurred due to the recession that threaten the future of the Project, but this was not an issue in 1986-87.

In summary, therefore, the challenge facing the Task Force was to find ways to assess the system and its schools, assist in planning at all levels, and provide advice on effective and efficient use of resources. The next issue addressed by the Task Force was: 'In the light of the task ahead, how does change occur?'

Exploration of the Change Process

At the start of the Project, the members of the Task Force were not familiar with much of the change literature described in Chapter 1, although it has been a major focus of study since that time. In September 1986, however, the change process was examined using a model developed by Beckhard and Harris (1977), in which three stages or states are identified. They are: the present state, more clearly identified as 'where we are now'; the future state, which reflects 'where we want to be'; and the transition state, which is 'what we have to do' to attain the future state.

First, the Task Force needed to define the future state; that is *"a detailed description of what the organization will look like when the desired condition is achieved"* (Beckhard and Harris, 1977, p. 20). In addition to the goals of education, Halton already had a mission statement:

'Pursuing excellence in education through commitment and service."

Furthermore, the senior management had also provided four general statements to describe its ideal future state, which would be reached when:

- excellence in education had been defined with clear indicators of effectiveness for the system in terms of student achievement, self-concept and community satisfaction;

- the staff shared an image of school effectiveness and a high degree of commitment to achieving it;

- there was a coordinated plan to achieve excellence in education at the system, school and individual levels; and

- leaders in the system consistently modelled the organisation's principles of effective leadership.

Through the combination of insights about the process and content of change, and with the guidance of senior statements, the Task Force developed a model to address three interrelated sets of variables:

1. the definition of excellence in terms of student achievement and self-concept outcomes, and its reflection in community satisfaction;

2. the growth towards greater effectiveness at the system, school and classroom levels;

3. the development of activities at all three levels (system, school and classroom) to enhance student outcomes.

Once the desired future state was articulated, the Task Force turned its attention to the present state. As there was limited data available on key future outcomes, the Task Force decided to focus on the characteristics of school effectiveness. As these had been demonstrated in research to enhance student achievement and self-concept, it was felt that they could provide baseline data against which progress towards the future state in Halton could be measured.

Examination of the School Effectiveness Research Findings

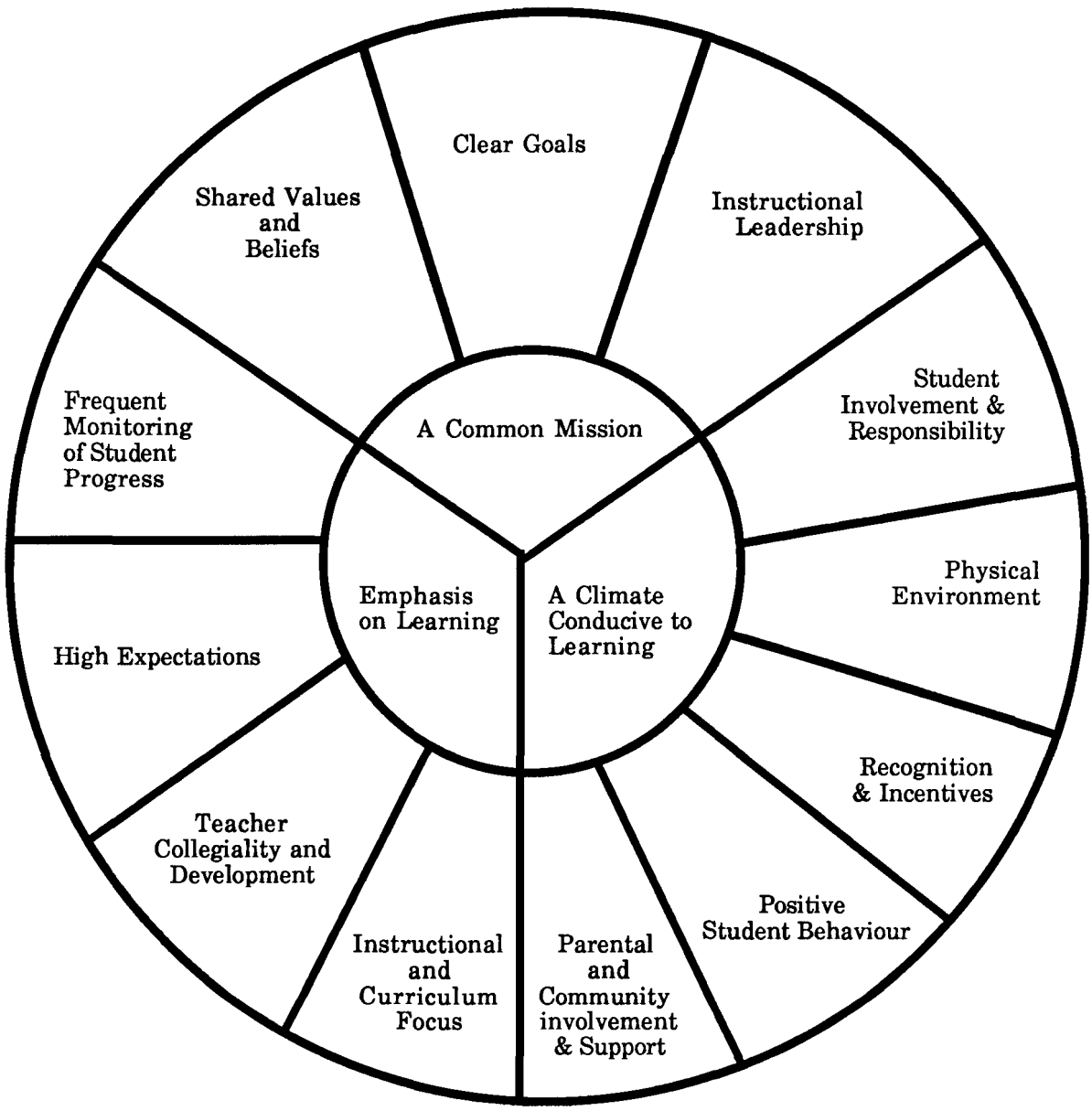
A detailed examination was made of the findings of British and North American school effectiveness studies in order to isolate the characteristics most commonly defined. At this stage, the Task Force had less knowledge of studies carried out in other countries, as reported since 1988 at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement. The research in which the researcher had been involved, School Matters (Mortimore et al., 1988), however, was highly influential, and was incorporated into Halton's final model. Nonetheless, it was considered necessary to look beyond the findings of School Matters for two main reasons. First, the model to be developed by the Task Force would have to be relevant to secondary as well as elementary schools. Second, some classroom and school practices in Halton differed from those in the Inner London Education Authority. Consequently, if the Junior School Project had been replicated in Halton, it would not have been possible to

examine all of the same practices. Thus, the findings necessarily would have been somewhat different. For example, whereas in many London schools teachers planned a variety of activities in different subject areas to be undertaken by different groups of students during one classroom session, in Halton schools this did not occur. A different example at school level is the role of the vice principal or deputy head. In London, all schools had a deputy head, 75 per cent of whom were also full-time class teachers. In contrast, not all of Halton's elementary schools had a vice principal, and in those that did, the vice principal rarely even had a part-time teaching assignment.

Context is important when examining school effectiveness (Teddlie and Stringfield, 1985; Hallinger and Murphy, 1986; Chrispeels and Pollack, 1990), and what is effective in one situation might not work in another. In the opinion of Task Force members, however, the vast majority of whom were practitioners, it was more important to come up with a list of characteristics that could create a common language throughout the system, than to offer different characteristics for different types of schools. This may be perceived as a weakness of the Project, although two points should be noted. First, the difference between the most and least affluent schools in Halton is much less extreme than between two schools at each end of the continuum in an inner city, where many previous studies of contextual differences have been carried out. Furthermore, the least affluent school in Halton would be considered to have an average intake if it were in the inner city. A second circumstance is the emphasis on school-based change that became a focus for the Project within a short space of time (see end of this chapter and Chapter 4) with the concomitant belief that as each school was unique, it would tailor the model and process to its own needs.

The composite list of effective schools characteristics developed by the Task Force was based on a model developed by Sackney (1986) (see Figure 2). It can be seen that there is significant overlap between these characteristics and those quoted in both School Matters and Fifteen Thousand Hours (Rutter et al., 1979). Furthermore, attention had also been paid to some of the process characteristics from school improvement studies, for example teacher collegiality and development. In this could be seen the beginning of the linkage of school effectiveness and school improvement in Halton (see discussion in Chapter 11).

Figure 2: The characteristics of school effectiveness



There were 12 key characteristics in Halton's model. These fall within three broader areas: a common mission; emphasis on learning; and a climate conducive to learning.

The Task Force communicated this model through presentations and dissemination of copies of the model, accompanied by brief quotations that illustrated each area and characteristic. Over the next two years the quotations were elaborated (see Appendix E). As new research became available some were also updated. The following quotations have been revised since 1986-87.

A Common Mission

> *". . . a . . . mission . . . articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future . . . a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists"* (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p. 89).

Clear Goals

> *"Agreed-upon goals and ways to attain them enhance the organizations's capacity for rational planning and action"* (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 13).

Instructional Leadership

> *"The leadership of the school principal is critical to improving the workplace for teachers"* (Smith and Andrews, 1989, p. viii).

Shared Values and Beliefs

> *"To be a 'team' meant to recognize and value the unique contribution of each member, teachers and non-teachers alike, to a joint enterprise"* (Nias et al., 1989, p. 60).

Emphasis on Learning

> *"The primary purpose of schooling is teaching and learning"* (Lezotte and Bancroft, 1985, p. 26).

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

> *". . . some means must exist in the school by which the principal and the teachers remain constantly aware of pupil progress in relationship to instructional objectives"* (Edmonds, 1979, p. 22).

High Expectations

> *"Children . . . work better if taught in an atmosphere of confidence that they can and will succeed . . ."* Rutter et al., 1979, p. 188).

Teacher Collegiality and Development

> *"In successful schools . . . teachers valued and participated in norms of collegiality and continuous improvement . . . they pursued a greater range of professional interactions . . . including talk about instruction, structured observation, and shared planning or preparation"* (Little, 1982, p. 325).

Focus on Instruction and Curriculum

> *". . . in those classes where pupils were stimulated and challenged, progress was greatest"* (Mortimore et al., 1988, p. 252).

A Climate Conducive to Learning

> *"In the view of the parents we surveyed . . 'Teach my child with tender loving care' might well be posted on the bulletin board side by side with 'knowledge sets the human spirit free'"* (Goodlad, 1984, p.88).

Student Involvement and Responsibility

> *". . . schools in which a high proportion of children held some kind of position of responsibility . . . had better outcomes with respect to both pupil behaviour and examination success"* (Rutter et al., 1979, p. 197).

Physical Environment

> *". . . pupil outcomes . . . tended to be better when the schools provided pleasant working conditions for their pupils"* (Rutter et al., 1979, p. 195).

Recognition and Incentives

> *"All forms of reward, praise or appreciation tended to be associated with better outcomes"* (Rutter et al., 1979, p. 123).

Positive Student Behaviour

> *". . . less emphasis on punishment and critical control . . . was beneficial. Where teachers actively encouraged self-control . . progress and development were enhanced"* (Mortimore et al., 1988, p. 255).

Parental and Community Involvement

> *"Our findings show parental involvement . . . to be a positive influence upon pupils' progress and development"* (Mortimore et al., 1988, p. 255).

Once the model was developed, the pilot schools began to try out different activities related to it.

Piloting the Model

The nine pilot schools were each given a set of responsibilities. These were to:

- determine areas of interest from the criteria for effective schools;
- adapt or develop ways to determine the present state of the school;
- participate in achievement, self-concept and community support assessments;
- devise a plan for school improvement that reflected assessment, staff development and budget; and
- be prepared to be a resource to other schools.

The pilot school principals reacted to these responsibilities in a variety of ways. Some devoted their attention to the development of an improvement plan with more or less staff involvement in the process, according to their personal style. In one school where the principal maintained virtual control of the planning process, a written plan was quickly developed. Staff in this school beyond department head level, however, were scarcely aware of the characteristics of effectiveness and showed little commitment to the process. In contrast, in two other schools, the principals spent considerable time on the development of shared decision-making and the need for collaboration, as noted elsewhere (Killion, 1989). Consequently, it took much longer for the written plans to be articulated.

When they were, however, the outcome was much more likely to be a product of their entire staffs. One of these two schools was subsequently selected in 1989 for study as one of the most successful examples of school improvement in Ontario (Leithwood et al., 1991).

A variety of instruments was developed for work with the pilot schools, many of which were involved in school effectiveness projects. Two of these projects are outlined in vignettes later in this chapter.

Developing Action Plans

In Spring 1987, when pilot schools had been involved in the trial of a variety of instruments and approaches to the development of school improvement plans, the Task Force developed three key result areas for the system. The foci of these were student achievement, student self-concept and community satisfaction. For each area, indicators were defined as were action plans to be followed by system, school and classroom personnel in order to achieve these areas. Within the action plans was incorporated a variety of assessment techniques, and activities related to the characteristics of effective schools, as piloted in the nine schools (see Appendix F for one example of an indicator and its action plans).

In an analysis of the present state of the system, the members of the Task Force attempted to identify the attitudes, practices, policies, structures and incentives they believed would require change in order to reach the ideal future state. In addition, they highlighted all the groups and individuals that would be affected by the changes outlined in the key result areas. Presentations were given throughout the system of the key result areas by Task Force members, and representative groups were sent draft copies of these areas for inspection, discussion and response.

By this time, several other schools had expressed interest and curiosity in the work of the Task Force and wanted, themselves, to become more involved. This posed financial implications.

Budget Submission

Financial support for the implementation of school improvement projects is imperative to demonstrate commitment on the part of political decision-makers to the project's ideals (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). Furthermore, the different initiatives on the part of school staffs require

extra resources, in terms of technical support, materials and release time for planning and training (Eubanks and Levine, 1983; Louis and Miles, 1990). During the first year of the Effective Schools Project, a budget submission was made and approved. The amount requested was not extensive by comparison with many other initiatives, but it allowed for a variety of needs to be met. These included: release time for Task Force members to visit other schools and systems where similar projects were underway; test development and computer time; the invitation of experts to the system; plans for an international school effectiveness conference to be held in May 1988; and support for other interested schools to undertake school improvement projects.

School Effectiveness Projects

The six school superintendents were each given a small budget to encourage school effectiveness projects within their groups of schools. To receive money, schools had to develop a plan that related to the future state document. They also had to incorporate assessment devices and strategies for implementation, be prepared to offer in-service to other schools in their chosen improvement area, and write a short report of their project that would be added to a network system. Task Force members and the researcher were available to provide support and to link up schools that were involved in similar projects.

By the 1987-88 school year, 25 schools had received modest funding to introduce teachers to the effective schools concept. The money was spent on a variety of purposes by school staffs. In addition to the provision of release time for teachers, it was also used to purchase appropriate literature and to pay speakers.

School projects dealt with a wide range of school-related issues. Some, for example, examined the integration of special education students (see Ethel Bow vignette), while others focused upon different aspects of the implementation of a new language arts programme. Both of these issues were major priorities of the school board at this time. At the secondary level, many schools developed projects to enhance programmes for the less academic students, linking into the equity issues addressed in school effectiveness research (see A. J. Marshall and Vernon Heights vignettes in later chapters). The enthusiasm generated by the financial support was significant. This suggests it was not the amount of money that was important, but the message behind the funding (see discussion in Chapter 10).

Examples From Schools

The two vignettes that follow illustrate the impact of the Task Force's work in the first year of the Effective Schools Project. These vignettes describe the activity in two pilot schools in 1986-87. The first focuses on a characteristic of effective schools, student involvement and responsibility, and the development of an instrument to measure its present state within the school. The second addresses the key issue of student self-concept. Both of these projects fell within their school's plan for improvement.

Streamland Public School

Streamland, a Kindergarten to Grade 8 elementary school identified its future state as:

> **"Kids who are caring and responsible for themselves, with an orientation to others."**

One of the school's goals was to develop all students as independent problem-solvers and responsible for their own learning. Some teachers started to work together to develop programmes and instructional methods to enhance the students' independence and responsibility. Several members of staff introduced classroom meetings, described by one as:

> *"A strategy for developing self-concept. Other benefits are that the meetings will improve students' speaking skills and their independence, so they will say what they think and be less influenced by others."*

The teachers wanted to find out just what the students expected for themselves and what they saw as a positive way to learn, and in addition, whether they already perceived themselves as having responsibility and involvement in class, around school and their relationships with other people. For this reason, the teachers asked the researcher to develop with them a student questionnaire that would address these issues. The items focused on different areas in which students might have responsibility or be involved: in learning; generally in class; in relationships with peers; in relationships with teachers; and whole-school responsibility and involvement. The questionnaire was piloted at another elementary school and subsequently amended prior to use at Streamland.

As a result of the findings, the school's goals for the next year were to extend class meetings and to initiate plans to implement peer tutoring (Jenkins and Jenkins, 1985) and cooperative group learning (Johnson et al., 1981, 1984). Teachers also decided to devote more time to peer consultation among themselves. The students' attitudes were to be re-assessed at the end of the year to examine whether these initiatives appeared to have had a positive impact. Unfortunately, there were some staff changes and this did not occur. The issue of teacher mobility and its impact on school planning and improvement has already been discussed in brief but will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Ethel Bow Public School

A Kindergarten to Grade 6 school, Ethel Bow's focus was different. They had taken as their goal:

> **"To increase the level of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students."**

One component of this was the integration of 11 students with learning difficulties, who had previously been in a self-contained class, into mainstream classes at their appropriate age level. The purpose of the integration was to provide all the resources and support they would have otherwise received in a self-contained setting, but with greater opportunities for positive peer interaction and the development of self-esteem. Thus, the special education resource teacher provided support to teachers in their classrooms, rather than withdrawing students with learning difficulties. The school's administrators wanted to examine the impact of integration on these students' self-concepts over the period of one year. The researcher worked with the administrators to develop an amended version of the 'Me at School' self-concept rating scale she had co-developed for the Junior School Project (Mortimore et al., 1986). The scale focused on students' relationships with peers and teachers, their perception of themselves as learners, and their responses to integration.

At three time points during the year, the researcher administered the scale individually to the 11 integrated students and 11 matched control students. She also devised a brief questionnaire to send to the parents of the integrated students, to elicit their opinions on integration and its impact on their children.

After initial philosophical optimism with regard to integration and the retention of students with learning difficulties in their classrooms,

teachers had expressed significant concerns about the change in the use of the special education resource teacher's time. Over the course of the year, however, the self-concepts of the integrated students improved while those of the control students showed little change. Parental responses were also positive. Consequently, as a result of these findings which the researcher presented to the entire staff, further adjustments were made to student programmes, particularly in the level of support. Furthermore, by the end of the project, significant changes in teacher behaviours and attitudes were noted. In the principal's view, they now perceived special needs students *"as their responsibility rather than that of someone else"*. They also saw themselves as members of a team and initiated problem-solving sessions to work through issues and concerns. Finally, integration had become part of the school's culture.

As a result of this project, several other schools embarked upon similar ventures, and Ethel Bow integrated some students from their self-contained behavioural class using the same model. In Ethel Bow, therefore, the change process moved through stages of hope, a honeymoon period, frustration and anxiety, problem-solving and adjustment, to satisfaction and refinement.

Summary of School Year 1986-87 and Directions for 1987-88

By the end of the 1986-87 school year, the anticipated future state had been described in detail. Some instruments had also been developed and piloted in the nine designated schools to determine the present state of student achievement, self-concept and community satisfaction. Other piloted instruments included measures of teachers' attitudes, students' behaviour, and teachers', students' and parents' opinions of homework.

During her exchange year in Halton, the researcher had made many presentations on the school effectiveness research to administrators, several school staffs, a few parent groups, and some of the support staff, in an attempt to raise people's awareness of the characteristics of more effective schools. Schools were also sent a comprehensive bibliography on school effectiveness and an internal list of colleagues' research projects. This was to enable schools to connect with other schools who had similar interests, and to encourage them to turn to each other for advice. Several schools were also involved in school improvement projects.

The members of the Task Force had, by this time, become more familiar with the work on school improvement and the change process, many

references of which have already been described in Chapter 1. An expert on educational change had met with the Task Force and shared his insights (Fullan, 1982, 1985). He had commended Halton on having made a start in their project, but cautioned them that they were embarked upon a lengthy process. He also reminded the Task Force of the need for schools to have ownership in the improvement process if it was to be successful.

In addition, the action plans document, although clear to the members of the Task Force after many hours of discussion, was not as well understood by the system. Schools were uncertain of the process by which they could work on the key result areas, and what support would be provided, particularly in the area of assessment. This is one of the difficulties associated with the development of plans by a small group: that is, it is their plan, not other people's (Fullan, 1985).

A conflict had emerged between the philosophy of the group and the plan they had developed. The Task Force had seen itself as being guided by four principles (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The four guiding principles

1. The focus for the School Effectiveness Project is each school - Halton's intent is to achieve the Future State through a cooperative approach in which teachers and schools can 'buy into' the Project.

2. The system will provide the direction, inservice and resources to support individual school plans - the intention is that the change process should be 'top down, bottom up'. Hence, the system will offer broad directions but the schools themselves will devise the plans appropriate to each school and implement them with the support of trained advisers and inservice.

3. The focus on effective schools will be integrated into existing supervision, planning and managerial systems - the initiative has been set up to enhance existing organizational procedures through the provision of more systematic information.

4. This is not a 'quick fix'. The plan will take more than five years - change does not occur overnight. It is a process rather than an event (Fullan, 1982).

These principles emphasised the importance of the school as the centre of change and the choice of the school to focus on areas relevant to its own context. It was not intended that the system provide more than 'broad directions', and yet the key result areas that had been developed, although well-intentioned, appeared to be somewhat prescriptive.

It had also become clear that even if schools had access to a wide variety of assessment instruments and knowledge of school effectiveness characteristics, without a process for the implementation and institutionalisation of change, little would occur. It was, therefore, necessary to create a vehicle that would give the people within schools more involvement in and ownership for their own development, and that could integrate the effective schools characteristics with all the other current initiatives in the system. Thus, the idea of a school growth plan was generated, as a systematic means of achieving continuous growth and development within a particular school. The word 'growth' was chosen deliberately. Many systems talk in terms of 'school improvement'. The Task Force members believed that there was already a lot of strength in Halton schools, and that 'growth' was a more positive way to build on existing strengths. One of the key goals for the 1987-88 school year, therefore, was the delineation and development of this planning process for schools. A long-range plan of action was developed to incorporate this idea. The plan also included a proposal for an annual budget, and, for 1987-88, set out proposed activities, timelines and people responsible for implementing activities. Chapter 4 describes the school growth plan and implementation strategies that were developed during the second year of the Effective Schools Project.

CHAPTER 4

From Initiation to Implementation (1987-88)

Year two of Halton's Effective Schools Project saw a considerable amount of discussion and some changes in direction. Many initiation activities were still underway although, in some areas, implementation strategies had already begun.

Task Force members visited other North American school districts embarked upon similar projects. As a consequence of these visits, recommendations were made for a 'planning process for school growth'. The design of the school growth plan became the main focus of the Task Force's work in the 1987-88 school year. In addition, a revised transition plan was developed to delineate system support, with particular emphasis on assessment; a plan for staff development was developed and initiated; and the Board hosted an international conference. Chapter 4 will describe these activities.

School Visits and Themes

The second year of Halton's Project started with visits by Task Force members to the following school districts across North America where successful school improvement projects already operated:

- Lake Washington School District, Seattle, Washington;
- San Diego County Office of Education, California;
- Glendale Union High School District, Arizona;
- Santa Clara Count Office of Education, San Jose, California;
- Vancouver Board of Education, British Columbia.

Collection of survey information, in particular that related to school effectiveness, was an important focus of most of the visited districts, and support was also provided by the school board or local university for analysis and interpretation of the data. In Santa Clara, a school profile was developed that included student attitude, self-concept and conduct information, and reading and mathematics achievement results. The school profile provided a concise means to report back a wide variety of data. This was viewed most positively by the Task Force members who visited that district.

In districts where survey data were not collected, the attributes of school effectiveness were nonetheless used as a frame of reference for schools in their self-examinations, through process workshops in which priorities and action plans were established. In some districts, school effectiveness consultants worked with school staffs to develop and implement a school improvement plan. To support this, staff development related to effective schools factors and the planning process had a high priority. Furthermore, curriculum support staff were coordinated with their effective schools programmes.

Recommendations From School Visits

Task Force members returned to Halton with several recommendations for their colleagues. These included:

- a clear process for the development of the Project's concept, to include the definition and articulation of the indicators of school effectiveness attributes;

- strong commitment and leadership from Halton's senior administration. Public endorsement and an educational mandate were seen as essential;

- the hiring of an effective schools programme co-ordinator for a period of three years;

- an effective schools implementation team, coordinated by the effective schools programme co-ordinator, who would be 'empowered' with regard to decisions on budgets, programme, instruction and influence;

- coordination of the curriculum services and staff development departments with the Effective Schools Project. It was seen as vital that the activities of all three areas should be complementary, not contradictory or incompatible;

- endorsement of the concept of a school growth plan as an organiser and process for school planning and improvement;

- use of school effectiveness survey data for school assessment, to lead to development of the growth plan which would subsequently be evaluated;

- appointment of a research director, whose role should involve inservice to staff, and development and interpretation of assessment instruments;

- formation of school effectiveness teams within schools, given a small sum of money to start up projects;

- production of a trainer's manual for use by a support team to assist in implementation of the Project at school level;

- professional development opportunities to include the attendance of all school administrators at Halton's international conference in May, 1988.

As a consequence of their visits, the Task Force developed a belief statement:

> **Student achievement and self-concept will be enhanced by providing:**
>
> - **a process for schools to assess their effectiveness as related to validated characteristics**
> - **a system of planning to effect change.**

The Task Force committed itself to the development of a planning process for schools that would incorporate the assessment of school effectiveness. School growth planning will now be discussed in more detail.

School Growth Planning

To enable schools to look at the effective schools characteristics within their own context, a school growth planning process was developed. A school growth plan was a methodical approach to the sustained growth of a school. It enabled schools to focus upon initiatives from the Ontario Ministry of Education, school board and local community as well as assessment results and the views of its teachers, students and parents. In this way, a school could plan its own development over time.

In essence, the school growth plan was a limited list of priorities, which the school would commit itself to develop over at least a three year period. One-year planning efforts were seen to be less effective as they did not always allow time for everyone to 'buy into the process' and initiatives

frequently did not get completed. The specific number of areas of focus could vary according to the size of school. At the current time, the majority of elementary schools have committed themselves to three major objectives, whereas the larger secondary schools have tended to focus on four key goals.

Because the process of developing a school growth plan was a collaborative one which would involve an entire school staff, it needed to reflect the shared values and beliefs of the teachers. This point will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Members of the Task Force started to develop a growth planning process. The initial draft contained only broad statements.

For example:

What should go into a School Growth Plan?

- **Curriculum implementation activities**
- **School effectiveness activities**
- **General staff development activities**
- **Any other activities which will improve the quality of education.**

Who decides what goes into the plan?

- **Some items are laid on from the TOP DOWN: e.g. Ministry or Board priorities.**
- **Some grow from concerns expressed by the staff or community GRASS ROOTS.**

It was felt that more specificity was needed. Therefore, on the return of the researcher to Canada, she took the original draft and drew on models of other researchers and school districts, particularly in Great Britain (see, for example, McMahon et al, 1984; ILEA, 1986). This second draft was a detailed document that included more explicit details of what was included in the planning process. The draft was amended by Task Force members then sent to several other elementary and secondary principals for comment. Responses were positive, although some people requested examples of how to work through various parts of the process, particularly evaluation. A new draft was prepared during the summer to be shared with all principals at their annual conference in October 1988 (details of this event will be described in Chapter 5).

The document included a description of four stages which a school would go through to develop a school growth plan (Halton Board of Education, 1988a). (See Figure 4)

Figure 4
The process for developing a school growth plan

ASSESSMENT	SCHOOLS: • collect data related to - Effective School Characteristics - how the school is perceived - student achievement - student intake data - examine external and local initiatives
PLANNING	SCHOOLS: • validate data • use assessment data collaboratively to establish a School Growth Plan considering: - responsibilities - human resources - staff development - budget - timelines
IMPLEMENTATION	SCHOOLS: • initiate and monitor their plans of action drawing upon system resources • implement plans utilizing existing system structures - Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation - Manager's Letter - School Professional Development budgets and plans
EVALUATION	SCHOOLS: • gains in student achievement • results of School Growth Plan • changes in perceptions • next steps • a plan for reassessment

These stages were cyclical, and essentially corresponded to the following four key questions:

1. **Assessment**	--	Where are we now?
2. **Planning**	--	Where would we like to be in three years' time?
3. **Implementation**	--	How best can we move in that direction?
4. **Evaluation**	--	How do we evaluate the changes we are making?

Although schools had previously been involved in planning, the emphasis on assessment and evaluation was new for the Halton system. The growth planning activities suggested for schools to undertake are outlined in the next section, followed by a critical description of the activities as they actually occurred during 1987-88.

Assessment

Within the growth planning process, the assessment stage would occur before planning commenced. At this time the school would gather necessary information to provide an objective assessment of its setting, and analyse it, to enable the school to check its initial understanding of its situation with the additional data.

It was suggested that schools use a variety of methods, including informal observations, interviews, discussions, notes of activities, surveys and assessment results. Essentially, the important feature was to move schools away from complete reliance on the 'cardiac approach' (Glickman, 1989), described in Chapter 3.

Schools were encouraged to use existing data, including Halton's own mathematics and French assessments, the effective schools characteristics and a resource bank of attitude assessment instruments. Some of these were developed by the researcher during the previous year; others came from different sources. The researcher continued to develop instruments to examine perceptions of students, teachers and parents. As these became available, they were offered to schools (see Robin Small vignette for one example).

The booklet also recommended that any information collected not only should be examined for overall trends, but should be disaggregated to examine differences between groups of students, as had been achieved in School Matters (Mortimore et al., 1988) and has been recommended by other researchers (Todnem and Warner, 1989; Levine and Lezotte, 1990). Ideally, this would include differences between:

- females and males;
- students from different social class backgrounds;
- students from different ethnic backgrounds;
- students in different years;
- students taking different subjects;
- students taking subjects at different levels of difficulty, according to the Ontario Ministry of Education's specifications (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984);
- students in French Immersion and non-Immersion programmes.

The initial data collection and analysis were to be done by a small school-based team which coordinated the school growth plan. The number of people on the team would depend on the school's size, but the team was to include both administrators and teachers, representing various perspectives. The school was also encouraged to consider involving parents, students, elected members and community members, because of valuable and different perspectives they might bring to issues being addressed. Some anxiety was and continues to be expressed, however, with regard to the involvement of parents in this process. It appears that teachers are not eager to include parents or students until they themselves feel adequately involved (see discussion in Chapter 10).

Throughout, the local school superintendent would be informed and requested to provide input. Other staff members would also be consulted as part of the assessment process, and results fed back to them before the planning phase when they would participate more actively.

Planning

During the planning stage, assessment information would be used to establish the school growth plan to include specific prioritised goals or areas of emphasis defined by detailed staff discussion of the assessment results led by the school growth plan team. Goal statements would capture a description of what success would look like when the growth plan was completed. Once goals had been set, teachers would select one

that interested them, and work in groups to brainstorm activities and actions to enhance it.

The resulting action plan would include responsibilities of staff members for specific activities, timelines or target dates by which they should be completed, and staff development and resource needs, with requests for help from people both within and outside the school.

Finally, the action plan would also include indicators of each goal's success. Staffs would decide what criteria to use to assess the goal's effectiveness, and agree how and when it should be assessed.

Implementation

During implementation the school would actively follow through with the growth plan, and carry out the actions necessary to ensure its completion. This would be a long-range process, and schools were recommended to review and monitor it periodically to see whether activities had taken place as planned and if they appeared to be having the intended effect.

It would be important, initially, for the principal to ensure that staff, students and any other people involved had been fully informed about the school growth plan, and that they all understood and were committed to their roles within the process.

As implementation progressed, schools would focus on support strategies to help staff who were involved in the initiation of change and development, such as forums in which staff could share skills and strategies acquired through in-service, release time for teachers to plan together, coaching, consultation or peer problem-solving (Loucks-Horsley and Hergert, 1985) and time for reflection (Schon, 1983).

As with all implementation efforts, problems were to be expected (Louis and Miles, 1990), although at this stage the Task Force was not sure how these might manifest themselves. What was clear, however, was that a comprehensive staff development support system would be necessary (see later in this chapter).

Evaluation

The final stage of school growth planning would be evaluation. Evaluation was fundamental, because if the measurement of growth was

students' learning, it was essential to devise ways of knowing whether the changes met that purpose. Not only, however, was it important to know the degree to which objectives had been achieved, but also whether activities had been completed and if the plan itself had been useful. Ultimately, the question that needed to be answered was, 'Has this made a difference?' Unfortunately, this was the phase of planning that had, in the past, been neglected in many schools.

Schools were advised to use two sets of assessments to examine the effectiveness of the growth plan and goals: formative and summative evaluations (Scriven, 1967). Formative or ongoing evaluation would find out if arrangements were working satisfactorily and whether people were fairly content, and a summative, final evaluation would assess the success of the plan and whether objectives had been met.

Schools were also encouraged to use a mixture of formal and informal procedures in their monitoring and evaluation exercises. The growth plan's effect upon student performance could be evaluated using the criteria selected at the planning stage.

As part of their evaluation, schools would ask themselves what effect the activities had on the children's learning and self-concept, how the teachers felt about what happened, what people were doing that they did not do before, and whether the school had taken on too much.

A key feature of the evaluation stage in Halton was that it was intended solely for internal school use. Its prime purpose was to give teachers information about what had been achieved. This is most important. The likelihood of schools 'buying in' to an evaluation process is much greater if they do not see it as an exercise in external accountability. This is not to say that accountability is not crucial. Through this process, however, schools would be empowered to examine their own successes and areas of weakness in an environment of trust (for further discussion, see Chapter 10).

Monitoring of the plan was meant to be an ongoing process, and the final evaluation would usually take place near the end of the school year. This would be the time when decisions would be made about each goal within the plan. The school growth plan team, after having examined all evaluations, would prepare a short report, either written or oral, about the main stages of the plan so far. In this they might describe what had actually happened and what people thought about this way of working. The report might also include information about any external initiatives

likely to have an impact on planning for the following year. It was recommended that teachers be given time to reflect upon this report before meeting to decide future directions. The report was also to be shared with the school's superintendent.

Final discussions might revolve around changes that had been introduced, and the issues of whether the development should be continued and/or extended. In both cases, various consequences had to be examined. These included: explaining what was involved to 'newcomers', both teachers and administrators; demands upon time and other resources; general school reorganisation and the timetable; classroom organisation and teaching strategies; and staff development and training needs.

If a school did not yet have sufficient information about the development to decide whether it should be made a permanent feature, agreement was to be reached as to when it would be appropriate to take this decision. It was essential, however, that successfully accomplished goals be maintained and institutionalised such that they became a regular part of the school's norms and practices (Loucks-Horsley and Hergert, 1985). Traditionally, this was not always the case. Sometimes, schools 'completed' a goal and then turned to other key initiatives without a backwards glance. Institutionalisation strategies would need to be incorporated into training for school growth plan teams.

After reviewing the growth plan's areas of emphasis, the whole process would be repeated. For goals that would be a continuing focus, further planning, implementation and evaluation would be necessary. If new goals were selected, schools might wish to do some other assessments before they started planning.

It was hoped that a future addition might be the comparison of student achievement against intake information and historical data. Through the examination of the same students' scores in mathematics, for example, over two consecutive years, having taken into account individual differences in home background and gender, it would be possible to look at students' progress from one year to the next. Other initial assessments could also be reapplied to look at change and/or growth, and historical data could be used to provide information on, for example, trends in attendance as related to achievement scores.

Initial Trials of School Growth Planning

Many of the early difficulties that emerged were in the assessment area that was unfamiliar to most Halton educators.

In the 1987-88 school year and, indeed, in the two subsequent years, the data collection process was somewhat 'ad hoc'. Due to lack of data collection expertise and limited research resource support within the school board (see Chapter 10 for further discussion), schools largely relied upon small-scale questionnaire surveys and verbal needs-assessment processes to generate areas of focus.

The visits to other systems had unearthed two methods by which school effectiveness attributes could be woven into the assessment process. Most districts used needs assessment questionnaires, completed by teachers, parents and students. After analysis, results were discussed and incorporated into school plans. In one board, however, a discussion process was used, whereby schools examined each attribute within their own context.

At this time, the researcher was not in Canada. As several other perceptual instruments were available, it was decided to delay the development of effective schools questionnaires until the researcher returned to Halton. Meanwhile, a workshop, similar to that seen in Vancouver, would be designed, to be facilitated by principals in their own schools and to focus on the indicators of effectiveness. It was, therefore, decided that a list of indicators be drawn up, related to the characteristics of effectiveness, but personal to Halton.

The workshop approach was favoured by some administrators who had expressed anxiety over the collection of a large amount of data. This was due in part to a lack of knowledge regarding data analysis and interpretation. It also stemmed from a concern that data might fall into the 'wrong hands' and be misinterpreted. Reluctance to make use of 'hard' data for assessment is an ongoing issue which still needs to be addressed in staff development programmes. The development of the effective schools workshop commenced early in the 1988-89 school year (see Chapter 5).

One of the potential dangers of over-collection of data is subsequent uncertainty as to how to organise and bring meaning to it. This was demonstrated in one secondary school. During a changeover of principals, the exiting principal administered three homework surveys,

to students, their parents and teachers, and a student attitude questionnaire. As part of his entry process (Halton Board of Education, 1988b), the incoming principal interviewed all teachers. He subsequently sent out a 'report card' survey to parents, administered a staff collaboration questionnaire, and had the staff generate a list of accomplishments and concerns. The result was a call to the researcher because the school felt 'swamped'. The researcher recommended a variety of strategies for the planning team to tackle the data. Even with this advice, the magnitude of the data prompted the principal to summarise it into a four-page document for the department heads to examine and highlight key issues.

For this reason, the researcher is currently working to ensure that schools collect only a manageable amount of data. Training is also provided on its interpretation (see School Growth Plan Team Training in Chapter 6). The situation will further be eased by the development of a school profile, or data organiser, in the 1991-92 school year (see next section - Assessment).

Ethnicity data had never been collected in Ontario, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) had sensitised boards to some of the political issues. Therefore, the Task Force advised schools to note differences informally, and to ensure all students were equitably treated (see also ILEA, 1983, for further discussion of equality of opportunity).

Few immediate problems came to light in the planning, implementation and evaluation areas at this early stage of the Project, which does not mean that problems would never exist; merely that they had not yet surfaced.

As growth planning was developed, it became evident to the Task Force that considerable system support would be necessary to enhance the process and reduce later problems. They, therefore, developed a parallel transition plan for system support that included the regional activities necessary to facilitate the Effective Schools Project throughout the system.

Transition Plan for System Support

The transition plan took into account many recommendations of Task Force members after their return from visits to other districts. The model followed the format established for the school growth plan. An outline of

the plan is given below. There are five sections: preparation; assessment; planning; implementation; and evaluation.

Preparation

For adequate preparation, all Halton staff would need awareness, understanding and a commitment to the school effectiveness process. Success would be indicated when: a common language about effective schools was used in Halton; the development of effective schools was a teacher-driven process; school growth plans evolved from data-based sources; the director and superintendents understood and supported the process and gave it public verbal commitment; and support groups 'let things evolve' rather than trying to control the process.

Meetings were scheduled between the Task Force and all key groups, including superintendents, to discuss the process and implementation plan. Each school would be requested to discuss the effective schools characteristics and background research. The intended focus of discussion would be on activities or conditions in the school that reflected each factor.

School representatives would attend a meeting where school-generated lists of indicators of the characteristics would be consolidated into one overall list.

Each school would develop a school effectiveness team whose purpose would be to communicate with staff on characteristics, develop consensus on the need for a process, and initiate a data-gathering component.

Assessment

Objectives in this area focused on the availability of perceptual, achievement, attendance and behaviour information, synthesised into a school profile. The indicator of success would be that school growth plans and school effectiveness projects would be based on data provided in the profile.

A sub-committee of the Task Force was established to investigate the feasibility of developing a school profile. Along with student achievement and some historical data already collected by the board, other components of this profile could be used by schools to plan and evaluate more effectively.

As noted earlier, it was seen as imperative that schools understand that data analysis would not become part of external school evaluation, but rather should be used for the development of school goals aimed at growth and improvement. Without these assurances it was felt that schools would be reluctant to become involved in the sharing of school-based data that could be valuable in the determination of future directions.

A link was necessary between the educational and administrative departments to enable background information to be compared with regional statistics and surveys already in use. This link would be a challenge as, in the administrative department, there was a very low level of understanding and commitment to the use of what was perceived as student administrative information for educational purposes. The anxiety and suspicion shown by the administrative department mirrored the need for information and personal concern teachers often go through when faced with an innovation (Loucks and Hall, 1979).

The sub-committee also noted that without human and financial resources, this project could not be supported. It was pointed out that any attempt to develop this on a part-time basis would stretch the people available beyond the capabilities of their day-to-day job expectations with the board.

The implications of this particular transition plan goal were the need for a researcher to coordinate data development, collection and analysis, and inservice provision for schools on the school profile.

Planning

As the full impact of growth planning was recognised, it was clear that schools needed to know how to plan for change. Support was, therefore, needed in the area of facilitation. It was arranged that graduates of a joint process consultation programme between Halton and a neighbouring school system (see Alignment of Staff Development) would help schools with goal-setting activities. It was also planned that people would attend external workshops on facilitation skills, and that consultation experts would be brought into the system to work with selected leaders. Success in this area would be seen when schools were able to operate the planning process with minimal support.

Implementation

The availability and accessibility of human resources and information to support project action plans was seen as a key objective, as was a regional staff development plan that would respond to inservice needs related to school growth plans and effective schools projects. The measure of success would be that supervision agreements between staff members and their subordinates would reflect the content of school growth plans and effective schools projects.

This component of the transition plan would require a staff person to be hired to establish and maintain an ongoing directory of resource staff available for special projects, to coordinate the training of these support staff, and to develop a bank of assessment strategies. The maintenance of networks between schools involved in similar projects would also be a feature of this person's role.

Also included as a priority was the provision of in-service on effective instructional models. Specifically highlighted were the identification of four or five instructional models with proven results, and arrangements for the training of resource people. The intent was to provide systematic, long-term training focused on the instructional process using strategies with proven research bases for enhancing student achievement and self-concept.

Evaluation

To enable schools to relate student achievement and self-concept measures to school intake characteristics as a means to determine student growth, an index of school intake would need to be established. This would require the support of senior administration and the board of trustees to collect the necessary data. If this could be obtained, the indicators of success in this area would be that each school would measure its own progress and would use the results to shape its plan for change.

The sub-committee who worked on the school profile also looked at ways to determine intake data, that is the background characteristics and previous learning of students, as a basis for the determination of their progress over their school years. Their mandate was to investigate whether it was feasible to develop a set of indices that would describe the background characteristics of a school's population.

In their search, they found a number of indices used by other jurisdictions (for example, Sammons et al., 1983; Cooley, 1987). These included: family size; sibling birth order; type of housing; number of schools attended; educational background of parent(s); employment type of parent(s); single parent family status; ethnic background; and first language of students. Family size, sibling birth order, number of schools attended and single parent families were the only four presently identified on Halton's student information forms that could be retrieved if a computer programme were created. Halton Region had information on type of housing but there was no programme by which the Task Force could access it.

Collection of historical data had not been a recent priority for the board. Attendance patterns, analyses of students' marks, dropout and school leaver statistics, course-taking patterns and course dropouts were only available for secondary students. Admission and withdrawal records and monitoring of identified special education or gifted students were available at both elementary and secondary levels.

It was agreed that the potential for further analysis of Halton's data base was considerable, but that a gap existed in the collection of board-wide data at the elementary level. It was also felt that research support was needed to access and manipulate such information. In order to improve the current situation, it was seen that the value of this data base would need to be accepted by the senior administration of the board, and their commitment secured to support the development of the necessary software to retrieve the required information. The impact of the political context on such a Project cannot be underestimated, and is further discussed in Chapter 10.

The transition plan had significant implications for staff development. It was to this topic that the Task Force now turned.

Alignment of Staff Development

In response to one of the objectives outlined in the implementation section of the transition plan, three members of the Task Force, based in Halton's central office, started to look at current staff development opportunities. Although many programmes were being offered to a broad range of participants, the various initiatives were somewhat uncoordinated. As Fullan (1991a) notes:

> *"Staff development will never have its intended impact as long as it is grafted onto schools in the form of discrete unconnected projects"*(p. 331).

The group of three had various concerns. They perceived an overlap of initiatives, a lack of clear communication and coordination between departments, a feeling among teachers that there was no 'plan' to help them be more effective, and questionable carry-over of single workshops to the classroom. In short, they believed that the system was in need of an organisational framework for staff development.

This group thought that the goals of staff development should be to make every individual more effective in his/her role, to focus on more effective classroom instruction, and to be a process rather than an event (Fullan, 1982). Furthermore, they expounded that effective staff development programmes should incorporate several factors: principles of research and in particular, the findings of school effectiveness studies; the model of theory, demonstration, practise, feedback and coaching (Joyce and Showers, 1983); adult learning principles (Knowles, 1984; Brookfield, 1986; Moore, 1988) and an understanding of stages of adult development (Krupp, 1981, 1989; Huberman, 1988); school-based identification of needs, as outlined in school growth plans; and a response to clearly articulated needs elsewhere throughout the system.

The positive outcomes of such a staff development programme, linked to the Effective School Project, would ideally: enhance student achievement and self-concept by improved teaching techniques and school climate; lead to staff growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes and empowerment, supported by professional networks; and produce curriculum implementation and instructional development at system level, through the professional growth and recognition of staff. A positive culture for change would also be built.

The group of three presented their vision to the senior administration who approved it. Almost all of the existing in-service programmes were woven into a more cohesive model, and areas of need identified. New components of support were developed at this point, although many others have evolved subsequently.

A key existing support programme that operated during the 1987-88 school year was process consultation (Schein, 1969). One of its benefits was that it was already a part of Halton's culture and was, therefore, not viewed as

'another fad'. This programme prepared people to work as a participant or leader in group situations and to facilitate issues in work groups.

In an experiential programme, participants developed an awareness of group development stages through first-hand observation. They also learned to recognise conditions that required process consultation and how to assist schools to assess their needs. Other theories participants examined and applied included communication, problem-solving, decision-making, group norms and growth, leadership and authority, team building, contracting, improving motivation, interpersonal effectiveness, and evaluation. Thus, this programme focused on both political and cultural facets of the change process.

Many other professional development programmes operated during the 1987-88 school year. A bonus for staff development in that year, however, was the Beyond Effectiveness conference.

Beyond Effectiveness Conference

In May 1988, Halton hosted a conference attended by more than 600 educators from across Canada, Great Britain, the United States, The Netherlands and Sweden. This conference was organised to ensure that all Halton staff members were aware of school effectiveness and school improvement by providing them with an opportunity to hear a number of internationally renowned researchers in these areas. Through the organisation of this conference, a leadership programme was financed for the system's key leaders, as well as a secondary school department heads' programme, a teachers' professional activity day and a programme for supervisory officials from across Ontario.

These programmes were held at various sites throughout the school system, at no cost to participants or the school district. The fees for the conference thus paid for a considerable amount of staff development for Halton employees, and provided an approach to enhance the knowledge and interest of the very people whose involvement in and commitment to the Effective Schools Project was essential. In retrospect, the conference proved to be a stimulating way to accelerate the implementation of Halton's Project.

An unexpected result of the conference was a considerable profit. The conference organisers put the money into a trust fund. Its use for the Awards for Creativity in Education (ACE) will be discussed along with other initiatives in the 1988-89 school year.

While at system level the Task Force engaged in activities to enhance implementation of the Effective Schools Project, changes were beginning to occur in the schools.

Examples From Schools

The vignettes that follow describe two pilot schools in 1987-88. The first was a secondary school, engaged in a trial of growth planning. This vignette focuses on the overall process. The second was a small elementary school, also involved in growth planning. In this vignette, the process of a particular goal is outlined, from the assessment phase through to implementation. Evaluation would take place in the following year.

A. J. Marshall High School

A. J. Marshall, a school of 1000 students, had been involved in planning objectives since it opened 10 years previously. It had not, however, been a very participatory process and resultant commitment on the part of teachers had not been great.

Near the end of the 1986-87 school year, the school management team (administrators and heads of department) initiated a data-gathering exercise that had four components:

1. A student survey focusing on attitudes to learning, their work, teachers, self, the future and a variety of other facets of students' lives (King, 1986).

2. A parent survey that examined satisfaction with several aspects of the school and its programme.

3. A staff survey that involved various indicators of effectiveness.

4. Observer ratings and comments by the researcher who had been invited to spend two days in the school visiting classes to assess the social and physical climate.

These data were summarised by the management team who also incorporated informal comments of staff and the community. This summary was made available to all staff who then met with their department head to give further input on the many areas identified in the

data, discussed the information, and gave feedback to the management team.

An out-of-school two-day retreat took place for the 15 members of the management team, three teacher representatives, and an external facilitator. The following four goals were drafted:

1. **Staff and students take pride in and have respect for the people, programs and property of the A. J. Marshall community.**

2. **A. J. Marshall programs are meaningful and relevant in that they meet the needs of students in the basic** (vocational), **general** (college-oriented) **and advanced** (university-oriented) **levels.**

3. **Students are effectively prepared for careers through in-school and out-of-school experience.**

4. **Students are actively involved in the process of their own learning.**

These goals were shared with all staff, discussed and endorsed, and chairpersons for each goal identified. A special staff meeting enabled interested staff to select one of the four goal areas and join a committee that would set one or two specific objectives for that goal. Once the objectives had been identified, they were shared with the whole staff. The committees were also responsible for setting timelines for the remainder of the year, for interim reports, and assessments of their efforts. A newsletter was sent out to all staff outlining the process taken. Funding from the school's superintendent was received to pursue the school's school effectiveness project, a collaborative venture with two other schools which was an objective listed under the second goal:

> **"Review of program and development of instructional strategies for general level courses in concert with Red Maple Secondary School and Vernon Heights High School."**

Some strengths of the process, as perceived by the principal at that time, were: the involvement of the whole staff in goal-setting; the use of data from the community, staff and students to determine needs; the selection of reasonable timelines; incorporation of a generally-agreed growth plan; limiting the number of objectives for each goal to prevent overload; and an implementation team made up of members of each committee to keep the

process on line, draw conclusions and suggest future directions. The key concern of the principal, however, was the school's ability to stick to this agenda, especially if new directions were forthcoming from the board, ministry or community. Nonetheless, the school committed itself to follow their selected goals for at least three years, which was a new step for them. The principal's concern, however, was prophetic. In February 1989, he was moved to another school and, since that time, A. J. Marshall has had three principals. The rapid turnover of administrators caused some instability from which the school is only beginning to settle at the time of writing. The impact of administrator movement on growth planning is further discussed in Chapter 10.

Robin Small Public School

By 1988, the staff of Robin Small, a small Kindergarten to Grade 5 school, already had an understanding of the characteristics of effective schools. They had also had much discussion and debate on their values and beliefs. The outcome of this was a collaboratively developed mission statement that read:

> **"Inspiring the joy of life-long learning"**
>
> 1. **Creating a positive environment**
> 2. **Developing a sense of self-worth, responsibility and respect**
> 3. **Working together to meet needs**
> 4. **Encouraging curiosity and creative expression**

School goals and objectives were set and teacher committees struck to develop action plans and timelines. The plan for the first year was to focus on a school climate conducive to learning. Hence, student participation, rewards and praise, appearance and comfort, and consistency in terms of behavioural expectations, were the target areas. The latter is the focus of this vignette.

The researcher worked with the Positive Environment Committee to develop instruments to help assess the present state. One focused on behaviour, another on school and classroom atmosphere. These were distributed to teachers, parents, lunch supervisors, and instructional assistants.

For students, a different approach was taken to ensure every pupil would have an opportunity for input. The entire school was involved in a brainstorming session, over the public address system. Each classroom was provided with three questions:

- What are the rules at Robin Small?
- What are the problem areas?
- What rewards and consequences would you like to see?

The committee collated information from the questionnaires and school-wide brainstorming, and read and discussed Halton's policy documents, relevant ministry policies, related documents and sample behaviour codes from other schools. They divided into subgroups to write up different areas of the behaviour code. Subgroups reported to the committee after which discussion and revision took place. A rough draft was presented to staff and some parents, and feedback was generated in the areas of 'suggested changes' and 'problem areas'.

The final document was completed and put into an appropriate format for pupils, incorporating a cartoon of the new school mascot (Small Robin), a toy monkey. The mascot was used to present the code of behaviour to the pupils at an assembly. One area of the new guidelines was highlighted each day on the morning announcements. Stickers were supplied to teachers and office staff to reward positive behaviour.

Teachers identified the strengths of this process: a sense of ownership because all partners in the school had participated; a clear understanding by all of the guidelines and reasons for them; the ability to reach all age levels through the use of a mascot; the development of a sense of pride; a more positive school ethos; increased parental support; and a greater consistency in expectations.

The process was not without its difficulties. These included a greater amount of time than anticipated to develop and introduce the behaviour code, and uncertainty over the best time to introduce the code to students. The principal also cautioned that the code needed to be kept a high priority in order that staff and pupil interest in it would be maintained.

Activities were planned for the following year, to incorporate: behaviour management workshops for staff; 'catch kids doing something good' certificates; distribution of copies of the code to students as well as parents; and an evaluation of the implementation of the code that could lead to revisions.

This vignette has described work on only one of the school's four goals. In a proposal to her superintendent for extra financial assistance for staff development in the following year, the principal made observations concerning the growth planning process:

> *"What became apparent during the development and initial stages of the school improvement effort was that being engaged in something significantly different is most often accompanied by feelings of frustration, dismay and annoyance. From a principal's point of view, it is extremely difficult to remain perfectly coordinated and able to plan ahead successfully. The process could have been made more manageable by starting with one or two major goals and expanding gradually.*
>
> *School improvement can be more satisfying if the principal and teachers involved have been trained effectively to cope with educational change. Just as ongoing assistance is provided to principals in order to increase their capacity to become improvement leaders, assistance should involve peer interaction and coaching."*

Input such as this from pilot school principals and teachers was incorporated into the Task Force's ongoing work, and was influential in the design of the staff development programmes, Leadership Effectiveness Assisted by Peers (see Chapter 5) and School Growth Plan Team Training (see Chapter 6).

Summary of School Year 1987-88 and Directions for 1988-89

Year two of the Effective Schools Project was one of considerable discussion, some highlights, but also frustrations. The year started somewhat slowly after initial enthusiasm of the school visits. Task Force members were all heavily involved in their own jobs and unable to devote extended time to Project meetings. The researcher, the only person with a full-time commitment to the Project in the 1986-87 school year, was in England for the first part of the year, although plans were underway for her return to Halton. In a letter written by the superintendent to the researcher in February 1988 he commented:

> *"Without full-time energy, the Task Force is operating in first gear."*

The main achievement in the latter part of this school year was the development of a working draft of Building a School Growth Plan. It was

not until the following year, however, that schools other than the pilot schools began to make use of the planning process. Even then, some schools continued to use old methods of planning by instinct and without evaluation. The school effectiveness project component seemed to cause uncertainty because it was perceived as a separate element from the rest of the growth plan, and principals were not sure by what methods they should select their other major goals. The link between school effectiveness and school improvement is discussed in detail in Chapter 11. It appeared, however, that the school effectiveness project needed to be blended more closely with the rest of the growth plan, and that the entire growth plan, rather than only one part of it, be viewed as a vehicle for examining the attributes. Separate school effectiveness projects were abandoned at the end of the following school year.

Although much of the Task Force's work was directed towards assessment, some of the board's senior administrators also appeared to be less committed to the school profile because they were concerned that schools might be overburdened with data. This was a challenge the Task Force needed to address.

Groundwork in staff development and the Beyond Effectiveness conference were important because both focused on communication, coordination and the development of a common language. By the end of the year, many staff, particularly those in positions of responsibility had begun to talk 'effectiveness', and Task Force principals began to use the growth planning process in their schools. They approached the task in various ways, demonstrating the process's unique nature, some more successfully than others (see next chapter); yet all were consistent with the guiding principles outlined in Chapter 3. Task Force members were relieved that growth planning would enable schools to plan their own development, because the original plan had seemed somewhat prescriptive.

Implementation had slowly got underway. Using the terminology from the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Loucks and Hall, 1979) that examines people's concerns about innovations, most Halton staff were still at an awareness or personal concerns stage.

Those at the awareness stage either knew little about the Project and, therefore, it did not seem to affect them, or wanted more information before they became involved. Others with personal concerns had more knowledge about the Project but no real commitment to it. They focused on its implications for their own roles, whether it would mean more work

or loss of control. It is not surprising that the Project had only reached this stage, given that change is slow, involves people making meaning of new ideas (Fullan, 1982), and the Task Force's endeavour to communicate and receive feedback on each initiative. Communication with other groups, particularly the senior administration, caused some frustration (for further discussion on the politics of change, see Chapter 10). What seemed clear to Task Force members after two years immersed in school effectiveness and change theory, was often a puzzle to other people. In addition, the director resigned, and there was concern that the senior administration might not be committed to school-based planning.

Two key events occurred near the year's end that gave the Project renewed energy. First, a new director was appointed. He had previously been a superintendent in the system, responsible for employee services and staff development, and had supported the Task Force's work. A man firmly committed to process, he modelled the Task Force's guiding principles in his everyday work. His directions for Halton will be outlined in the next chapter.

Second, Halton became involved in a Learning Consortium, a cooperative venture with three other local school boards, the Faculty of Education in Toronto, and the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education. Its focus was the improvement of instruction within the context of school improvement, and, once again, it brought Halton into closer contact with Fullan.

In the 1988-89 school year, much of the Task Force's early work began to bear fruition. Chapter 5 describes that year.

CHAPTER 5

From Implementation to Institutionalisation (1988-89)

In the first two years of Halton's Effective Schools Project, most implementation activities had been directed towards schools' organisational development and the change process. A vehicle had been developed through which teachers could become more involved in the determination of their school's priorities, and the model of school effectiveness characteristics was familiar to many teachers. In reality, however, the characteristics as defined meant little to most teachers in the classroom who worked as they always had, using familiar methods and techniques. Subject-specific in-service programmes continued to be available, and many teachers had taken advantage of them. Feedback suggested that such programmes were not very successful because of the 'one-off ' nature of sessions, and lack of follow-up for participants or interest on the part of their school colleagues.

Essentially, in order to bring teachers into the Effective Schools Project and make it meaningful for them, there needed to be a strong classroom component. Indeed, as Stenhouse (1984) explained, without the recognition of and support for teachers, all school improvement initiatives would be worthless:

> *"Good teachers are necessarily autonomous in professional judgement. They do not need to be told what to do. They are not professionally the dependents of researchers or superintendents, of innovators or supervisors. This does not mean that they do not welcome access to ideas created by other people at other places or in other times. Nor do they reject advice, consultancy or support. But they do know that ideas and people are not of much real use until they are digested to the point where they are subject to the teacher's own judgement. In short, it is the task of all educationalists outside the classroom to serve the teachers; for only teachers are in the position to create good teaching"* (p. 69).

A closer examination of the classroom thus became a major focus of the Project in year three, although further work continued on activities already started.

Furthermore, due to the new leadership within Halton, and Halton's involvement in The Learning Consortium, the Effective Schools Project

broadened its scope. It ceased to be perceived as 'another Halton initiative', many of which had 'come and gone', according to more skeptical members of staff. School effectiveness and the school growth planning process became the framework within which all other initiatives could operate. The interconnectedness of all of the initiatives in Halton was key to the institutionalisation of the change process in Halton, and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Over the course of the year, the new director and superintendents collected information from a wide variety of people and examined the current state of the system. As a result of their deliberations, at the end of year three strategic directions were passed by the school board and published. This committed the Task Force's work to policy and institutionalised the philosophy of the Effective Schools Project.

1988-89 was a busy year in a variety of arenas. Refinements were made to the growth planning process in response to feedback from the principals, and greater understanding was gained as a result of pilot school trials. The emphasis on staff development also continued. In Chapter 5, these activities and others that occurred in the third year of the Effective Schools Project are examined. First, key staff development offerings are discussed.

Staff Development

1988-89 was a significant year for staff development, as the planned alignment described in Chapter 4 began to be enacted. Development offerings were increasingly consistent with Task Force directions, as they became more school-based and emphasised a need for greater collaboration between support staff. The development of common language throughout Halton was a focus, through consistency of the message relayed in different offerings. The two key development areas in this year were leadership and instructional development.

While curriculum was well established in Halton, the board's involvement in The Learning Consortium was timely, as it provided substance for the focus on the enhancement of the teaching process. The Consortium was set up in 1988 as a pilot project in teacher education, both pre- and in-service, and is a collaborative partnership between four school boards and a university. Fullan et al. (1990) describe its intent:

> *"Two of our most important concerns include curriculum and instruction priorities of school boards and issues pertaining to*

> *the management of change. We work with the assumption that classroom improvement, teacher development, and school improvement must be systematically linked if substantial progress is to be achieved"* (p. 13).

The rationale behind the Consortium is ongoing development of educators that, in turn, works towards the improvement of students' learning and development.

Bennett and Rolheiser-Bennett, consultants employed by the Consortium, developed a classroom improvement model using the imagery of gears and cogs (Fullan et al., 1990) to demonstrate interrelationships between the myriad of classroom activities. It had four components: content; classroom management; instructional skills, and instructional strategies. Within content were incorporated curriculum, child development and learning styles. Student behaviour in class, in particular the prevention of and response to misbehaviour, was the focus of classroom management. Less complex teacher behaviours, such as the framing of questions at various levels of complexity and the amount of wait time given to students before they respond to questions, were included within the instructional skills component. Instructional strategies, by contrast, were seen as more complex. These were based on teaching models proven to be successful, for example, cooperative group learning (Johnson et al., 1981; Slavin, 1988) and concept attainment (Bruner et al., 1977).

All four of these 'cogs' were seen by the authors to be crucial to the process of teaching, and, maintained Fullan et al. (1990), all except content had often been neglected both in pre-service and in-service training. Certainly, in informal conversations with many teachers, the researcher has noted the reported lack of class management training in teacher education institutions. Furthermore, in her many hours of observations for School Matters (Mortimore et al., 1988), she was struck by difficulties experienced by many teachers, including some who had taught for a number of years. Essentially, good classroom management frees the teacher to concentrate on more important issues.

Some Consortium activities will be outlined. Then, Halton's own projects related to the Consortium but also linked with the Effective Schools Project, will be discussed.

Summer Institutes

Just prior to the 1988-89 school year, 20 Halton educators participated in a seven-day residential workshop. This emphasised cooperative group learning, an instructional strategy selected for its proven impact on student achievement and, in particular, social outcomes (Johnson et al., 1981).

Coaching and mentoring (Joyce and Showers, 1982) were incorporated within the training and provided the follow-up support that had been neglected in Halton's earlier staff development programmes. Another element of the Summer Institute was instruction on the implementation of change. This linked the training on instructional improvement with the process of school-based planning adopted by Halton.

While the Institute promoted some follow-up that included observation and feedback as a basis for reflection, some people were uncomfortable with the coaching component, and others had difficulty in finding time to observe colleagues in different schools. Therefore, when the institute was repeated, teams were encouraged to apply from schools and to include at least one administrator. In this way, it was hoped to create more impact within a school, increased support, and better opportunities for coaching activities. The importance of principals' attendance with teachers at staff development activities has been stressed elsewhere (Barth, 1990; Watson et al., 1991).

Cadre of Trainers Programme

Further training in classroom management, coaching and other skills and strategies was offered to 10 educators. These people attended 10 intensive one-day workshops between January and June, 1989. This programme's goal was to develop internal expertise for in-service provision and support to teachers. An additional two days per month of release time was provided for each teacher to allow them to work with teachers in other schools. The support provided by these people, however, varied and some ceased involvement at the end of the year.

Partners in the Classroom

A crucial time to provide teachers with support and on-going training is during their first year of teaching. Induction programmes, such as the one in which the researcher, herself, participated in Inner London in the late 1970's, were offered in England some years before they started in

North America (Huling-Austin, 1989). The concept of mentoring, however, a key feature of induction programmes, dates back 3500 years (Gray and Gray, 1985).

As an adjunct to its Consortium activities, Halton developed a programme for first year and mentor teachers. Each new teacher was paired with an experienced teacher from the same school. Partners attended 10 evening sessions together. This meant that the mentor teachers also received input, which, they reported, benefitted them both in terms of their own professional development and their ability to provide assistance to their less experienced partner. The sessions included a variety of topics that incorporated features from the Summer Institute, as well as handling parental interviews, classroom management, and modification of curriculum to suit individual students' needs. Introductory sessions were held before the school year, and partners worked with each other throughout the year.

Professional Activity Day and Related Staff Development

Throughout the year, various in-services were offered to teachers and support staff, with a focus on classroom management techniques and cooperative group learning. Previously, each year the curriculum department had offered a day of subject-based professional development activities. It was decided that the May 1989 Professional Activity (PA) day would be devoted to cooperative group learning, to reinforce the Consortium's work. In the morning, consultative staff worked together at different elementary schools, and offered basic or more advanced level workshops according to the schools' requests. In the afternoon, subject-based workshops were offered, but these were all linked to cooperative group learning.

Evaluations of the day were positive in terms of potential for future use of the activities in classrooms. At this stage, 27 per cent of Halton's elementary teachers reported they had a relatively good working knowledge of cooperative group learning. When the exercise was repeated in February 1990, 34 per cent felt they had a good knowledge of the strategy. Even though these percentages appear low, they represent an increase in perceived comfort level with the technique.

Although this strategy was introduced from outside the schools rather than being a 'grass-roots' initiative, several teachers had been interested in cooperative group learning for a long time and had already formed a

network in Halton. These people offered expertise throughout the system as interest in the strategy spread.

Schools' reactions to cooperative group learning varied. It often depended on the reaction and role of the principal. Success often ensued where the principal, her-or himself, became actively involved in staff development sessions, supported the staff when they tried the technique and, most importantly, acted as a gate-keeper (see also Fullan, 1988) to ensure that teachers were not bombarded with other initiatives simultaneously. Teachers' involvement in decision-making was also crucial (Mortimore et al., 1988). There was frustration in schools where the principal had selected the PA Day workshop level without prior consultation of the staff, and the content of the workshop was too sophisticated or too simple.

According to consultants who visited schools regularly, cooperative group learning was beginning to be well established as one classroom strategy in Halton elementary schools. Many secondary schools also organised in-service sessions, set up committees, and sent teams to the Summer Institutes, although usage in these schools was still fairly limited. At the elementary, as well as secondary, level, a number of schools committed themselves to the further development and exploration of the strategy through its selection as one of their growth plan goals. It appears in this instance that the 'top-down, bottom-up' approach to change (Fullan, 1982), proved fruitful (see Chapter 10 for further discussion).

It was important to stress to Halton staff that cooperative group learning was not the only technique they should use in their classrooms. Initially, when Halton began to focus on this strategy, some people felt that they should use it the whole time. There was no attempt, however, to force all schools to focus on this method. Initial training was and continues to be offered to schools, to give them the opportunity to learn about and experience the technique before they choose whether they wish to make it a major focus.

Leadership Effectiveness Assisted by Peers (LEAP.)

Halton's leadership development activities continued to focus on and support the Effective Schools Project. By the third year, most administrators were familiar with *"the vocabulary they need to discuss school improvement"* (Lezotte, 1989b, p. 18), in particular, effective schools research and the school growth planning process.

The principal and vice principal professional development committee were aware, however, that school improvement, has a greater chance of success if there is a supportive school culture (Fullan, 1988). Furthermore, the literature suggested that principals who are instructional leaders guide their staff better to create good schools (Smith and Andrews, 1989). The Leadership Effectiveness Assisted by Peers (LEAP) programme was developed from this premise. Its focus was the role of the principal as instructional leader and the importance of a collaborative school culture (Rosenholtz, 1989, Nias et al., 1989) to enhance school effectiveness and the growth planning process. Administrators attended five full-day sessions between March and December 1989, led by Fullan and Bennett.

A key feature of the programme was the use of Joyce and Showers' (1982) coaching model to increase information transfer. Administrators worked on specific assignments with a peer coach during and between sessions.

The researcher collected evaluations after each session. These were particularly positive with regard to the benefits of working with a coaching partner. Administrators commented on the opportunity to clarify concepts, share experiences and solve problems together. After three months, one reflected: *"My trust level and respect is at a very high level for my coaching partner, and is growing".*

The reported success of this in-service as an ongoing professional development experience encouraged Halton to adapt the programme for consultative staff. That LEAP programme began in the 1989-1990 school year (see Chapter 6). Also, the researcher carried out an interview study in the autumn of 1990, to assess the impact of the programme. Results demonstrated the importance of the interconnections between all of Halton's staff development offerings (Zywine et al., 1991).

Another ongoing staff development feature linked to the Effective Schools Project was the annual Halton Elementary Principals' Association (HEPA) Conference. The influence of the Task Force and the Consortium were already evident at this event.

Principals' Conference

When the HEPA conference was held in October 1988, the school growth planning process was still at a developmental stage, and feedback was needed on aspects that made sense and those that might be improved. At

the conference, the Task Force introduced growth planning, through the cooperative group learning jigsaw method (Aronson et al., 1978), and provided a list of questions to promote discussion. Feedback was use for further modification of the growth planning booklet described in Chapter 4.

In an examination of people's comments, it was clear that strong links were perceived between the new process and other current initiatives in the system. For example, within Halton's existing supervision system, principals developed and discussed with their superintendent an annual Manager's Letter, or personal and professional plan. The principals saw this as a vehicle to achieve what was in the school growth plan; that is, the Manager's Letter would become the principal's commitment to the growth plan. Similarly, they believed that the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (CS and E) process between principals and teachers, in which staff members discussed their own annual goals with their principals, could be used to focus on individual teachers' involvement in specific growth plan activities.

The principals saw growth planning as a useful framework for the development of a plan to address their schools' needs. Moreover, they felt it built on existing practice. The need to build staff commitment to the plan was a strong focus of administrators' comments. This was seen as more likely to occur if the integrity of the school-centred nature of the process was ensured: that is, needs of individual schools had to be respected.

The principals requested that the process be introduced slowly to allow for reflection, and asked that other initiatives should not be added by senior administration, as had sometimes occurred previously. They also recommended that the same message be delivered to the entire school system, to include teachers, consultative and other support staff, caretakers, secretaries and parents. A need for in-school time was expressed for principals to work with their staffs. It was suggested that some days currently used for regional professional development activities might be given over to the schools for growth planning and related activities. People also pointed out that schools were at very different stages at this time. The pilot schools and a few others had already embarked upon the process, and some other schools used a basic planning process. Some, however, used nothing at all. Consequently, the system would need to coordinate the timing of in-service and implementation to meet a variety of needs Finally, it was seen as

imperative that support staff be added to help schools through the process and that resources be available.

It was clear that people required a significant amount of training or assistance to implement the planning process. In particular, the collection of assessment data and its interpretation caused anxiety for some who had limited, if any, experience with school-based research. Several principals asked how data should be analysed. Other requested assistance included: in-service in group process skills, especially team-building; a support booklet; training in the development of measurable goals; and outside facilitators to help with the process.

Another conference activity was a set of presentations by principals and vice principals, in which they described different aspects of the school growth planning process in their schools or specific growth plan goals. Participants commented that this form of practical input was more useful than ideas presented by keynote speakers at many previous conferences, which demonstrated that many of their concerns by this stage were focused on this innovation's management (Loucks and Hall, 1979).

It was clear that some people felt overwhelmed by the task ahead and, most particularly, concerned that this would be just one more initiative to add to the many already undertaken by schools. This concern was also noted by an invited speaker who cautioned the school system that it had probably 'taken on too much'. The director of education endorsed this view in his first address to all of the principals, in which he reminded them of the need for balance in their lives and workplaces.

While changes were being made to the growth planning booklet, further insights into the process were being gained within the pilot schools. In Chapter 1, essential factors for school improvement were discussed. Observations of pilot schools who had been involved in growth planning confirmed that there, indeed, appeared to be prerequisites to the process; underlying aspects of the school's culture that needed attention to promote a better planning experience.

Prerequisites to School Growth Planning

Essentially, the principal needed to move the school from a vision of a more attractive future to total staff commitment to a mission, as specified in the characteristics of effectiveness. This, in turn, would drive the growth plan. There were four features in this process:

- development of a shared vision;
- climate setting;
- promotion of staff collegiality; and
- development of a school mission.

Shared Vision

In some schools, the principal and staff have diverse views and beliefs on educational issues and the purpose of education. In the pilot schools, and many schools studied by researchers (Barth 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990; Schlechty, 1990; Fullan, 1991a), principals found a vital early step to be a joint examination of teachers' values and beliefs. For some, this was not an easy task, particularly in schools where a new principal who believed in staff participation in decision-making followed a more autocratic principal. In these schools, staff were sometimes anxious and skeptical regarding the new principal's interest in their opinions and beliefs. In one school, in particular, the principal faced a considerable challenge as she worked with a staff used to 'the old ways' and made only limited movement in a two-year period before the task overwhelmed her. Other principals, however, found this work easier, especially in smaller schools and ones where a larger number of teachers had only recently come to the school. The School Matters team (Mortimore et al., 1988) found smaller schools to be more effective and noted, in these, more involvement of the deputy head and class teachers in decision-making. Although School Matters did not examine length of time teachers had been on a school's staff, the researcher had several discussions with headteachers who were, themselves, the newest members of staff. In one school, the most recent arrival on staff before the headteacher had started at the school 11 years previously. That head experienced significant difficulties as she tried to bring about change. The development of shared vision is elaborated in the case profiles in Appendices D1 and D2.

Climate Setting

A positive climate had been one of the key factors of effectiveness identified in School Matters (Mortimore et al., 1988). Halton's own model of effectiveness characteristics also emphasised a climate conducive to learning as an essential component to enhance pupils' learning and development (see Chapter 3).

The more successful principals of pilot schools devoted a considerable amount of time to the establishment of trust and openness with staff,

students and the community before they embarked on substantive changes (see also case profiles in Appendices D1 and D2). They invariably attended to such issues as improvements to the physical plant, the development of a school behaviour code, and the establishment of communication lines and decision-making procedures before they moved into the growth planning cycle (see Robin Small vignette in Chapter 4, and also, Louis and Miles, 1990). In the secondary schools, in particular, principals devoted attention to behaviour and attendance procedures, two notoriously popular and recurring themes in secondary schools. One principal noted, on moving from a pilot school to a new school:

> *"I had forgotten just how many of the basics I could take for granted at my last school. Here, everyone is concerned with the old favourites - behaviour and attendance."*

Adam (1987) found a similar picture in her study of secondary schools in Inner London when on exchange with the researcher. She visited secondary schools with recently-arrived principals, and asked them about the first changes they made when they came to the school. Almost all made some deliberate change to the physical environment as a statement of their arrival. This often involved the mending of broken equipment or the display of plants and pupils' work, shown to lead to a decrease in graffiti or abuse of school premises (Rutter et al., 1979).

The researcher, herself, quickly noted a difference in the physical environment of the primary school described earlier after the arrival of the headteacher who was the most recent staff appointee for 11 years. Within days, there were plants in the hallways. Initially, they were removed or defiled, but the headteacher persisted and soon they became an accepted feature of the environment. Furthermore, she moved her office closer to the classrooms, and created an outer area where children could visit her, read or play quietly before the start of the school day. Each time the researcher visited the school, there were several pupils in this area.

Promotion of Staff Collegiality

Among the more successful schools in the development of school-based initiatives were those who had spent time to facilitate staff planning together (see case profiles in Appendices D1 and D2). The importance of a collaborative culture to school improvement cannot be overstressed (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1989; Nias et al., 1989).

In Halton in 1988-89, there was considerable variety between schools in the amount of teacher collaboration. Traditionally in Halton, as elsewhere, teachers were seen to be autonomous. Their classrooms were their castles, and they were not expected to participate in school-level decision-making; nor was group planning of teaching programmes perceived a valid activity. There were exceptions to the rule; groups of teachers planned teaching units together and principals who created a team atmosphere in their schools, or those who encouraged joint planning. In 1986, however, the Task Force superintendent set up a Collaborative Planning Network in the group of schools for which he was then responsible. He offered financial support from the Effective Schools Project budget to the schools in his area to provide release time for teachers to plan together and for five days of in-service for a project coordinator in each school.

A committee of teachers, principals and support staff was set up to oversee the project and to plan the in-service for the coordinators, who were designated to work as coaching partners with their school principal. This aspect of the project was more successful in some schools than others: namely, in those where the principal was committed to the concept of collaborative planning. In the first assessment of the project in 1988 using a collaborative planning questionnaire developed by the researcher, participants valued collaboration but did not feel it was happening in all areas. Furthermore, they did not rate an especially high level of principal support for collaborative planning.

In a subsequent evaluation, however, one year later, there was an increase, both in the percentage of teachers who believed that collaboration was important and those who perceived various forms of collaboration in their schools. Essentially, through the provision of common planning time, a change in teachers' behaviour had occurred. This was subsequently followed by a change in their attitudes toward planning together. This concurs with Fullan's (1982) argument that changes in behaviour precede, rather than follow, changes in attitude.

In an independent study, Hargreaves and Wignall (1989) studied six of Halton's schools. In an examination of planning time, they found a shift in most from self-reliance to more collaborative cultures through contrived collegiality; that is, the organisation of school structures by administration, such as planning time, to encourage joint work between teachers (see Carlton Public School vignette at the end of this chapter).

From this research, it appeared that contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1989) was a necessary first step towards collaboration in many schools. The emphasis shift in schools to collaborative planning, also meant that group skills became increasingly important. Killion (1989) argues that for teachers to work and plan together, and to become more involved in school-level decisions, staff development in shared decision-making, group processing and conflict resolution is necessary. Principals undoubtedly also require in-service training in these skills, given that for some, at least, to relinquish complete control of the school's reins is likely to cause anxiety, and may be seen as a threat. Process consultation has already been described as one means of support (see previous chapter), but it was clear that more focused in-service would be needed for school growth planning teams. Due to time pressures, the development of this series of workshops did not begin until June 1990, and training did not commence until January 1991. On reflection, this important component of planning should have been designed and implemented earlier, to help allay fears about the new planning process, and provide strategies for planning teams to draw their colleagues into the process.

Development of a School Mission

Block (1987) describes 'vision' as the shared values and beliefs of a group of people, whereas 'mission' is the articulation of these values in goal setting and, sometimes, a statement of purpose. There is a lack of consensus as to whether the mission should precede planning or follow it. In some of Halton's smaller elementary pilot schools and in the elementary case profile school (see Appendix D1) principals worked with their staff early on to articulate their beliefs and to develop a short statement that summarised their school's values. This was also true of the secondary case profile school, although its staff preferred to develop a longer philosophy statement (see Appendix D2). In other schools, by contrast, particularly secondary schools, a conscious decision was made to wait until the planning process was well established before a mission statement was developed. Louis and Miles (1990), in their study of five urban high schools, also found a preference for planning first, because the evolutionary nature of planning allowed teachers to reflect on their beliefs and articulate them more clearly subsequently. It appears that timing is very much related to school context, and that there is no one correct approach to the development of a mission statement. Furthermore, some schools choose not to articulate their shared vision through a mission statement or motto. (For further discussion, see secondary case profile in Appendix D2.)

Other Support for School Growth Planning

The Task Force became increasingly aware of different schools' preferences to approach planning in a variety of ways, as suited their particular context and culture. It was important to the Task Force that individuality be encouraged within the broad framework of the growth plan. Strategies were, therefore, developed to meet a range of needs. Two of these are described: the implementation profile; and methods to incorporate the effective school characteristics into growth planning.

Implementation Profile

At the principals' conference, the principals who expressed most concern about school growth planning were those with least experience of goal-setting and implementation. They were anxious they would be expected to have a completed plan within a short space of time, and that they would be judged against their peers and found wanting if their plan was incomplete. These personal concerns were very real and reasonable, and had to be addressed.

Just as the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Loucks and Hall, 1979) demonstrates that individual teachers may be at different stages of readiness concerning a school initiative, so might whole schools and their principals, as demonstrated above. In the 1988-89 school year and, indeed, subsequently, schools were at varied stages of the planning process, including several who had barely started. This might appear a problem, and yet schools should not all be expected to be at the same stage if growth planning is truly school-based and individual differences are considered important. Given their different contexts and variations in lengths of time that principals and staff members have been at each school, they will have a wide range of issues to consider.

For some superintendents and trustees, school-based planning was a significant departure from the way schools had operated previously. Some of these senior administrators and politicians had been more comfortable with a top-down model of change, whereby schools conformed to set expectations. A couple of school superintendents, in particular, saw the growth planning process, approved of it, and wanted to mandate that all their schools have a complete plan within a short space of time. The political reality of this Project and its influence are discussed in Chapter 10.

It was evident that professional developmement activities needed to be addressed towards trustees and superintendents to ensure that demands were not made on schools to produce a full growth plan before some essential team-building had occurred. An implementation profile was, therefore, developed for principals' use so they might see at what stage their school was in various activities related to growth planning and the prerequisites outlined above, and share this information with their superintendents (see Appendix G). The implementation profile was based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. Implementation profiles have been used in the past in Halton to look at the implementation of different curriculum areas (Stoll, 1991c).

Methods to Incorporate School Effectiveness Characteristics into Growth Planning

An example of schools' diversity was their use of the effective schools characteristics in growth planning. At this point, principals were all aware of the characteristics. As a more detailed questionnaire had not yet been developed, some principals used surveys from other jurisdictions to evoke staff responses to the characteristics as observed in their school. Others gave their staff a broad overview of the effective schools research and asked them to rate each of the characteristics as it pertained to their school.

Some Task Force principals believed it would be helpful to schools if an effective schools workshop were developed for schools to elicit areas of need. Furthermore, it was felt that Halton should have its own list of effective schools indicators. Some of the group believed that Halton staff should develop their own indicators for each of the characteristics, to promote greater commitment to the criteria. While commitment was seen as important, the researcher was concerned that indicators derived from staff discussion might solely represent what teachers believed were effective components of schooling rather than those proven by detailed research studies to be effective. Despite the researcher's reservations, the group initially decided to elicit indicators from Halton's teachers, through a workshop. The implications of the link between theory and practice, and the researcher's role are discussed in Chapter 10.

The purpose of the workshop, as designed, was twofold: to help staff members understand the effective schools literature and characteristics; and to involve staff members in a process that would result in Halton-based definitions and criteria for each characteristic.

At the workshop, facilitated by the principal or vice principal, staff would select one of the three broad areas of a common mission, an emphasis on learning, and a climate conducive to learning to brainstorm examples of and success criteria for each area. The process would then be repeated for each of the 12 characteristics. Two staff members would then be identified to meet with colleagues from other schools to synthesise the results of these workshops, and develop Halton-based criteria.

Graduates of the process consultation series met with the researcher to react to a first draft of the workshop format. In their critique of the workshop design, the process consultants saw this as a valuable exercise for a school, but noted that the workshop process would need to be tailored to each school's awareness level. They suggested it might be advisable to work only with a small number of schools already familiar with planning while continuing work in this area with all administrators.

The process consultants cautioned that the process to develop Halton-based criteria beyond the school might be negligible, because teachers might not want to spend time after school on the task if they felt it might later be used formally by the system to judge them.

After consideration, the Task Force decided that the workshop was a useful vehicle to assess a school's needs, but agreed that the process to regionalise the criteria would be difficult to organise and might, after all, lack teacher commitment. It was agreed, rather, that a detailed examination be made of the school effectiveness literature. The Task Force clarified the effectiveness indicators, and drew upon the work of a group of Halton principals who had developed their own learning indicators. This ultimately resulted in a binder for the system that contained the characteristics of school effectiveness, and described indicators and activities that would fulfil these indicators (see Chapter 6.).

While discussions of indicators and a workshop were ongoing, further work continued on another strategy, the Awards for Creativity in Education.

Awards for Creativity in Education

One of the more positively perceived implementation strategies of the Effective Schools Project was the establishment of a recognition programme for outstanding educators, funded by the Beyond Effectiveness Conference profit, and set up specifically to promote the concept of

effective schools. This initiative was started in the 1988-89 school year and the first awards were made in early 1990.

The conference made $75,000 profit, immediately invested in a trust fund. The interest on the capital was awarded each year. This amounted to approximately $8,000.

A committee was set up in May 1989. Members represented all key groups in the system. Between May and October 1989 criteria, application procedures and conditions of eligibility were developed for the Halton Awards for Creativity in Education (ACE).

An overall summary of the criteria noted that:

> **"Awards will be presented to educators who have developed methods and approaches for the improvement of instruction consistent with the characteristics of effective schools."**

Successful applicants needed to have fulfilled two or more of eight criteria:

1. Created an active learning environment in an educational setting in which students feel positive about themselves and the learning experience.

2. Developed innovative techniques to encourage students to become creative and effective problem solvers.

3. Integrated into their activities a variety of experiences which help students develop the skills and attitudes of responsible citizens.

4. Successfully implemented cross-curricular instructional approaches.

5. Developed an out-of-the classroom programme which results in improvement in school climate or student self-concept.

6. Used innovative strategies to foster an enabling environment for all students.

7. Produced a unique programme or materials which can be shared with other professionals.

8. Inspired confidence and respect among their peers.

Each of eight successful applications would receive a grant of $1,000 to cover expenses for professional development.

The committee met to discuss the 44 received applications, and seven individuals and one team were selected. They represented elementary and secondary schools, a range of subject specialisations, and a balance of female and male recipients.

Awards and grants were presented at a meeting of the Halton Board, preceded by a reception to which families of the successful applicants were invited. Photographs were taken for display in the Halton board office, and recipients' names inscribed on a plaque to be mounted in the central office.

The entire process was received favourably within the system, and was seen by committee members to be a significant professional experience, given its focus on teacher recognition. Although the psychic rewards of teaching have been found to be vital motivators (Lortie, 1975), the respect of one's peers is also likely to be a positive influence on teachers' sense of efficacy.

Final Efforts of the Task Force

The Task Force was nearing the end of its task. A meeting was arranged with senior management to update them on the group's work and confirm their commitment. A sub-group prepared the following summary of seven key steps that would have to be taken to institutionalise the Project in Halton:

> **"To make the Effective Schools approach workable, there needs to be:**
>
> - **agreement concerning the Project's purpose, beliefs and values, in the form of public endorsement from the director;**
> - **clarification of administrative leadership and encouragement for principal in-service;**
> - **a consistent approach to the achievement of school effectiveness, through the school growth plan;**
> - **an effective schools implementation team, drawn from school and system levels, to take over from the Task Force;**

- **a research department to develop and process the school profile, assessment and evaluation instruments and procedures;**

- **commitment to the staff development plan** (see previous chapter), **and further staff development activities in the area of school growth planning and, in particular, at the school level; and**

- **a link between the Effective Schools Project, the curriculum and special education departments, and Halton's emphasis on instruction as demonstrated in work of the Learning Consortium."**

The senior management endorsed the group's work and noted that the rationale for the new Strategic Directions (see following section) came from the Task Force's work. During the course of the year, however, they had collected an enormous amount of information from a wide variety of sources, that had resulted in a plan for the reorganisation and redesignation of support staff to support school growth planning. Within this new plan they were unable to commit further research support. They also felt it was time for the Task Force's work to be nearing an end. It was at this time that the system took over the Task Force's initiative and major changes were seen.

Halton's Strategic Directions

Thus, as the year drew to a close, the institutionalisation of the Effective Schools Project occurred. The director took a strategic plan (Cope, 1981) to the Halton Board. This replaced the traditional five-year long-range planning exercise, and outlined directions for Halton for several years that attempted to recognise and accommodate the dynamics of change (Patterson et al., 1986).

The report to the politicians had three parts. The first contained the plan itself (Halton Board, 1989). It began with a statement from the director:

> **"The message was clear, when I assumed the role of Director one year ago, that everyone wanted our schools to have a clear purpose. Trustees, staff and community groups all reinforced the fact that the demands on our schools have been increasing, but that schools cannot do everything. We had to ask the question 'What are the two or three priorities on which we must concentrate our hearts, minds, energies and resources**

in the next five to ten years to ensure that the needs of our students are served?' "

Four guiding principles were outlined, that emphasised:

- the primary focus of instruction;
- the major role of the principal as instructional leader;
- the emphasis on collaborative planning, recognising the school as the basic unit of change; and
- the role of administrative and support staff as service providers to schools, through support of the teacher-learner relationship.

The plan highlighted three areas of emphasis. The first focused on the promotion of, and support for school growth planning:

> **"We must empower our schools to make their own decisions .. direct our energies and resources through cooperative planning to support and encourage school-based planning. The staff within each school will create a professional learning community where members share and learn together."**

The second strategic direction was related to the expressed need for expansion and growth of teaching methods as highlighted by the Learning Consortium, the school effectiveness characteristics, and the importance of an instructional focus to school growth planning:

> **"We must direct our energies and resources to support the teaching-learning process, by assisting our teachers to develop expertise in the four areas of instruction:**
>
> - **Implementation of curriculum**
> - **Classroom management**
> - **Instuctional skills**
> - **Instructional strategies."**

To support the first two directions, the third focused on the key areas of staffing and in-service:

> **"To attract, select, develop and retain the highest calibre staff."**

These directions were further supported by eight projects, identified as current key system needs. This is important, because these projects included several that addressed directions from Ontario's Ministry of Education, which highlighted that school improvement initiatives rarely exist in isolation from the influence of the outside world (see Chapters 10 and 11).

The report to the Board also noted that the strategic plan would be revised every two years, and that ways to evaluate the plan in line with its indicators would be developed over the next year. It can be seen here that there was a greater focus on evaluation than there had been at the start of the Project, but still within the system, goals were set without clearly laid out evaluation plans (see Chapter 10 for further discussion).

One of the key areas of emphasis, therefore, in Halton's strategic directions, school-based planning, emerged directly from the Task Force's work and this particular direction provided the driving force for everything else in the system, including the reorganisation of superintendents and support personnel. The other two had direct links with the Task Force's work over the previous three years.

Reorganisation of Support Staff

The second part of the Board's report outlined the senior staff reorganisation to provide leadership to implement the plan. Essentially, the superintendents would be 'flat-lined', with equitable distribution of responsibilities. In addition, new organisational structures would be created. Secondary schools would be grouped together and elementary schools would be grouped by area: north, east and west. Each would be assigned a superintendent in this new structure entitled School Services, which emphasised the focus placed on the school in the new organisation.

Instructional Services, by contrast, was created to emphasise the importance of classroom instruction. Four superintendents were assigned to work together to interpret Ontario Ministry directions, review and develop curriculum, and provide regional consistency, staff and leadership development to support instruction. Previous initiatives that involved curriculum, special education, staff development and the Effective Schools Task Force were all incorporated within Instructional Services.

In the report's third part, support staff's reorganisation was described. Until June 1989, curriculum coordinators and consultants had been

centrally located. With the change in emphasis to the school as the central unit, and to direct service to the schools, it was seen as necessary to decentralise support staff. Furthermore, with a new focus on instruction, consultants would need a more generalist approach rather than the current subject approach.

Recommendations were made to hire 34 new staff over three years to add to 29 people already in such positions. This would be a significant financial commitment for the Board. The new positions would be for a specific term, rather than indefinite as before, to encourage a range of experience in leadership positions.

Over the period that the report was taken to the Board, the director had meetings with all key interest groups. The new structure had been developed collaboratively by the director and superintendents over eight months. It had also taken into account findings of recent curriculum and special education reviews, in which many staff had participated, as well as the staff development proposal outlined in Chapter 4, the deliberations of the Task Force, the recent involvement with the Learning Consortium, and requests for written input from all staff. There was, nonetheless, considerable anxiety among existing support staff over the recommendations. The concerns of existing coordinators and consultants centred around: lack of clarity concerning role descriptions; uncertainty over reporting relationships and communication lines; a perception of lack of involvement in the decision-making process; loss of subject content at the expense of instruction; key positions being offered as term appointments, with subsidiary concerns about future career options and pensions; the possibility that roles might change over the years according to differing school growth plan needs; the need for extra resource support in the area of evaluation and monitoring; role change for existing personnel and, for some, a location change; an intense need for in-service; inadequate support provision for secondary schools; loss of regional consistency; and how the mechanics of the transition would be managed.

The majority of these concerns were at the personal level, according to the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Loucks and Hall, 1979). That is, most people focused on the implications of the change for them personally. It was clear that people were worried about a shift in emphasis to the schools, with a subsequent loss of leadership. Mitchell (1990), a Colorado superintendent, points out, however, the importance of:

> *". . . working to alter the perception that the schools must work to please the central office"* (p. 24).

Support staff involvement and commitment in a major change intervention are discussed in Chapter 10.

When the report was brought back to the Board at the end of the year for a decision, the Board supported the strategic directions and reorganisation of senior staff, but was unable to approve the proposed reorganisation of support staff. Financial implications influenced their decision. More important, however, were the reorganisation's rationale and mechanics. These appeared unclear to Board members, many of whom shared some of the support staff's reservations. The Board, therefore, recommended that the director and superintendents rework this part of the reorganisation. This task took a further six months (see Chapter 6).

June 1989 was a stressful time, and this continued for a considerable period. Concerns ran high with regard to what would be the most significant change the system had experienced for years. This could not help but impinge on perceptions of Board members, particularly those known for their more conservative approach. It is interesting that the trustees supported the underlying philosophy of Halton's administrative leaders but not the mechanics of how it would work. It is possible that they were not completely committed to the plan, given their rejection of a key part of it. Thus, as the year ended, a cloud of uncertainty hung over the district. The political influences on a change effort are discussed in Chapter 10.

Examples From Schools

As the Task Force's efforts began to gain momentum in 1988-89, schools started to try out different strategies. The first vignette below, shows a non-pilot elementary school and its focus on collaborative planning. It demonstrates both the assessment phase of growth planning and the increasing emphasis on collaboration throughout the system. In the second vignette, a high school took as one of its foci students in less academic courses who had been demonstrated, through disaggregation of assessment results, to be somewhat disaffected with their schooling.

Carlton Public School

In September 1988, the researcher was approached by the vice principal of Carlton, a kindergarten to grade 6 elementary school, and asked to design

a questionnaire to examine attitudes towards and extent of collaboration between teachers in her school as they planned study units. She had been placed at the school mid-year and found the school embarked on a collaborative planning project. The principal was committed to getting staff to work together and had set up the project such that all teachers were involved. Common planning time had been arranged for staff members teaching the same age group, and teachers were expected to make use of this time to develop joint curriculum units or themes. The vice principal noticed some resistance, and had decided to attend all planning meetings as a resource for staff. Specifically, she wanted to know the areas in which support was needed, to identify where there was most resistance, and which aspects of collaborative planning were perceived by staff to be of greatest importance.

The researcher elicited key areas of interest, then drafted a format that allowed teachers to give two responses to each question: first, whether they perceived that aspect of collaboration to occur in their school at that time; second, their perceptions of the importance of collaboration. The draft was discussed with the vice principal and was shown to several teachers at a different school. Amendments were made to the questionnaire which was then administered at the school. The researcher analysed the results, which were fed back to staff and used to make changes to various planning arrangements. Essentially, most teachers were positively disposed towards collaborative planning and perceived it to be important. These results gave the school a mandate to continue with the project, and directions for areas of improvement.

The questionnaire was readministered at the start of the 1989-90 school year. Although some growth was noted, teachers had difficulty responding to items about the principal because he had left suddenly, and the vice principal had moved to central office. Although, the new principal later continued with the project, other issues were in the forefront at this time. The effect on a school of change of administration has been noted in the previous chapter and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Vernon Heights High School

In a submission to his superintendent for funding for a General Level School Effectiveness Project, the principal of Vernon Heights, a traditionally academic 850 student suburban high school wrote:

> *"General Level Program has typically been neglected in Ontario high schools. It has not had the attention or resources devoted to it that have been allocated to the university-bound stream."*

In a province-wide survey of secondary students' attitudes to learning, school, teachers and several other aspects of their lives, disaggregation of results showed that students in the non-university bound courses in all schools were less satisfied with their schooling (King, 1986). A group of department heads and administrators decided to develop an action plan to improve instruction and curriculum in these general level courses. Their focus, in particular, was on the grades 9 and 10 (first and second year of Ontario high schools, equivalent to years 10 and 11 in Britain) and the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, social science and French. They believed that by devoting extra time and resources to this area initially for one year, *"it will generate long-term improvements which will extend to other areas as well"*.

Vernon Heights' project consisted of a team of selected teachers who expressed willingness to: concentrate their energies on general level for at least one year; commit to attend regular meetings and professional development experiences related to the project; exchange ideas with and assist fellow team members to write curricula; experiment with strategies; and assist with their peers' professional development. These people included many of the best teachers and department heads in the school, as perceived by the principal, most of whom traditionally had taught the more academic courses.

The project team involved teachers of subjects described above as well as the heads of guidance and special education and a vice principal. Every effort was made in timetabling to give team members a common lunch and/or spare period to facilitate biweekly meetings. In addition to these meetings, team members occasionally participated in longer professional development sessions, visits to other schools, and other activities. Regular progress reports were given to staff both through department and staff meetings.

The project specially addressed the following issues:

- effective instructional strategies;
- suitable instructional materials;
- preferred learning styles of students;

- curriculum review and development;
- evaluation of achievement;
- motivational strategies;
- behaviour management techniques;
- special education needs; and
- social-emotional needs.

The team members defined the intended student and staff outcomes of the Project: target students would feel more positive about school and achieve more; and team members would develop a bank of materials and ideas, establish contacts with schools across Halton and throughout Ontario to share ideas and resources, and act as resource people for other interested teachers within their school and elsewhere in Halton.

In a repeat of the student survey at the end of the school year, the students in these general level courses were considerably more positive than they had been previously. Three examples follow. Whereas 76 per cent had originally agreed with the statement 'Sometimes I do not know what is going on in class', at this time only 56 per cent agreed. Earlier, 62 per cent had agreed that 'Teachers are usually willing to spend extra time with me'. This percentage had risen to seventy-two. Even in terms of their self-concept, changes had occurred. Now, only 16 per cent believed that 'Someone like me could never have an effect on society', in comparison with 31 per cent when the survey was administered two years previously.

The General Level Project continued in subsequent years with ongoing positive student attitudes and increased performance in course work and examinations. In 1990, the team produced a handbook of ideas for the school system, and the students wrote the script for and produced a video where they recalled positive experiences, specifically in general level classes.

Summary of School Year 1988-89 and Directions for 1989-91

Year three of Halton's Effective Schools Project had seen a need addressed to concentrate more directly on the classroom. Through the link with the Learning Consortium, Halton found in instruction a clear focus for its school growth planning. Furthermore, different groups throughout the system were exposed to the same information and language, and for principals it was incorporated within the framework of school growth planning and school culture.

This was a year when principals' understanding of culture was heightened, as the vital importance of a collaborative culture to school growth planning became clear. For those used to 'the old way' in which plans were drawn up by principals and implemented by coercion, if at all, this meant a radical change in thinking. This did not happen overnight and still, as this is written, shared decision-making and planning are not features of every Halton school. Nonetheless, most principals were favourably disposed towards the growth plan's concept and gratified to have endorsement for the school's place as the centre of change.

Schools also continued, throughout the year, to engage in school effectiveness projects, financed, as before, by superintendents. Many projects were underway, often led by excellent teachers. It was fitting, therefore, that some of these less well-known staff be recognised, as they were the following January when the first eight Awards for Creativity in Education were presented.

The school effectiveness characteristics were not forgotten amidst all this activity. They did, however, taken on a lower profile in this year as planning took place to incorporate them more fully in subsequent years. Certainly at times, the researcher wondered whether the system had allowed them to drift away, even though some schools made use of them in their planning. It was only with the development of the school effectiveness questionnaires and the training workshops for growth planning (see Chapter 6), however, that the school effectiveness component returned to the forefront. The role of the school effectiveness characteristics will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 10 and 11.

The culmination of the Task Force's work, and also the result of eight months of deliberations and consultation on senior administration's part, were three strategic directions. These would guide the system for the next few years, and recognised the importance of the school as the unit of change, the growth planning process as its vehicle, instruction as its focus, and staff development, support and resources as its lifelines.

In all of the first three years' activity, one group in the system had been somewhat isolated. Through their ambivalence to the change going on around them and due to inadequate communication from the Task Force and other members of the system, the central office staff responded with anxiety to their reorganisation to support the strategic directions. Fear of role and location change and status loss underpinned this concern. The trustees, although accepting the strategic directions, shared some of these

concerns, and requested more clarity from senior administration. Consequently, one task for the beginning of year four was to provide a clearer rationale for these changes.

The Task Force's job was almost over. It would largely be left to individuals and small groups to coordinate further work. More important now was the need to blend in with other system groups, particularly those providing curriculum, special education and staff development support. In Chapter 6, this transition and final initiatives undertaken by Task Force members in 1989-90 and 1990-91 are outlined.

CHAPTER 6

Consolidation and the Revisiting of Effectiveness (1989-91)

At a final meeting of the Task Force in October 1989, the members discussed the current status of the school growth plan within the context of the school-based planning strategic direction and developed an implementation plan for its further use. It was decided that the document Building a School Growth Plan should be taken to the Board for ratification and to increase trustees' knowledge of the process. Meanwhile, the implementation profile would be discussed in small groups at principals' meetings to establish schools' needs at differing stages of the process. There was still concern that superintendents might insist that a principal have a fully developed growth plan in their first year at a school. It was not within the Task Force's power to mandate to superintendents how they should deal with their schools. Nonetheless, in the same way that Halton's leadership training had tried to convince over-zealous principals that change takes time (Fullan, 1982) and that people have concerns related to change that need to be addressed (Loucks and Hall, 1979), it was hoped that senior administrators would model this in their dealings with principals. This, of course, presupposes that all people share the same beliefs with regard to working relationships. In reality, this is rarely the case. Individuals deal with subordinates in a variety of ways. After having demonstrated how the implementation profile was meant to be used, it would be an act of faith that it would be used appropriately. The impact of people's approach to change is discussed in Chapter 10.

As yet, it was unclear how many staff really understood the planning process and its implications. Task Force members were concerned that poor understanding would result in a lack of commitment. Therefore, a file would be developed for staff to explain the planning process in concrete and practical terms. This would contain the school effectiveness criteria, and examples of growth plans. From the criteria, the researcher would design a questionnaire for teachers, parents and, ultimately, students that schools could use to assess their current state in relation to the school effectiveness characteristics. Staff development and assessment and evaluation were continuing thrusts. This chapter describes these activities, and continuing work on the system's reorganisation. First, however, the Board presentation is described.

School Growth Plan - Report to Board

Throughout the Project, information had been shared with the political trustees. This was vital to ensure their support for the Project's directions, and provided an opportunity to give them in-service on the benefits of school-based planning and school effectiveness. The extent to which they understood and supported this information is discussed later and in Chapter 10.

In January 1990, an information report on the school growth plan was presented to the Board. It focused on the importance of the school as the centre of change and the development of the planning model to support this. The integration of system expectations and school needs was explained, such that schools would continue to be responsible for the implementation of system directions, but would have the prerogative to place them into a logical sequence over time in accordance with their own needs.

The importance of data collection was stressed as an aid to schools in the determination of their goals and whether these had been accomplished. A school profile would, therefore, still need to be provided by the system to incorporate data unique to each school.

The report concluded:

> **"The second major direction in the strategic plan Toward 2000 is school-based planning. It is intended that the School Growth Plan will be the vehicle for the achievement of this direction. Schools are at different places in their preparedness to implement this approach to planning. Through effective in-service and networking of schools, implementation in all schools should occur within the next two years."**

Board presentations take two forms; those that require action, and those purely to give information. This presentation was of the latter type and, as such, was received without considerable debate. Had a budget been attached, the response might have been different. It is difficult to assess to what extent the political trustees understood the growth planning process and its potential benefits, and yet, it was at the heart of the changes being made at the school level.

The provision of data and achievement instruments were two of the commitments made to the Board. It is to these that discussion now turns.

Assessment and Evaluation

In the Task Force's early work, members noted that many of the findings of effective schools research were based solely on the results of standardised reading and mathematics tests, especially those from the United States. In addition, most of the systems visited by the Task Force measured their success through use of similar assessments. Although it had been the intention of the Task Force to develop procedures to assess a wide range of outcomes and the factors that make a difference to a school (see Chapter 3, and Mortimore et al., 1988), most of the time in the first three years was devoted to the creation and implementation of the growth planning process, staff development programmes and how to design a profile that would give schools useful information for planning. Assessment of appropriate outcomes was not totally neglected, but proved a complex challenge for which there was insufficient completion time. This will be further discussed in Chapter 10. Three issues, however, insured that a coherent examination of assessment and evaluation was started in the 1989-90 school year. First, in 1988, a Board-wide committee had been set up, separate to the Task Force but incorporating a few of its members, to examine assessment and evaluation in Halton. Its mandate was to produce a new policy on assessment to replace one passed in 1976 that stated, **"This Board is in favour of standardized, uniform tests for all schools in Halton Region".**

The second issue related to evaluation of the strategic directions. As noted in the previous chapter, within Toward 2000 was a commitment to assess the implementation of the strategic directions and to evaluate its initiatives. Third, the issue of the school profile still had not been resolved.

The various assessment and evaluation initiatives were thus linked in a report that emphasised the importance of student achievement and progress measures to provide information on the extent to which the system had achieved its goals. In a report to the Board, the intention to develop an indicator system was outlined. This explained the use of indicators to assess the impact of education, inform decision-making, ensure accountability, define objectives, monitor standards, encourage further effort, and identify effective practices (Cuttance, 1991). In Halton, it was felt they should be used for diagnostic purposes as well as to monitor performance or output.

Indicator systems, however, if poorly conceived, can be associated with many problems, that include: student and teacher exhaustion from an

excess of test-taking, which can lead to 'game playing' to meet obligations; high financial and time costs for implementation; poor reliability and validity of many tests; inappropriate use of data, for example to compare schools without reference to students' background or previous performance; teacher fear of indicator use for teacher appraisal; and whatever is measured is what becomes important while other areas become neglected.

The policy submitted to the Board attempted to take into account some of these problems through recommendations to assess student achievement and progress in relationship to Halton's goals and core programme, collect data using a statistically valid sample, use student achievement and progress data in curriculum reviews, ensure that assessment would support and enrich good teaching practice, and report periodically regional results of student achievement and progress assessments.

Before it would support such a policy, the Board desired further details with regard to the precise assessments to be used and their exact cost. Thus, although it had been intended to provide the specific implementation plan at a later date, this was not acceptable to trustees who were concerned about a subsequent major financial commitment. Furthermore, many of the trustees did not understand or see the need to make changes to the existing testing structure or policy wording. This was reflected in the comment of one who asked, *"Why can't you just make the changes but leave the wording?"*. For many trustees, their only experience of assessment was that which they had undergone during their own schooling, and they could not understand why a new system would be an improvement. It was, therefore, the task of the educators to help them see benefits of a more holistic approach. Unquestionably, the whole area of assessment and evaluation proved the most complex in this Project, took the longest time, and at the time of writing, has still not be completely resolved.

Throughout 1990-91 and the subsequent school year, work continued to elaborate on the plan. Performance-based assessments were piloted by a couple of schools, while committee members who developed the assessment plan underwent a variety of professional development experiences related to assessment and evaluation.

The amended policy emphasised the use of assessment and evaluation results to provide teachers with information on individual students' learning and on their teaching, develop and implement appropriate policies, programmes and curricula, and determine the extent to which

national, provincial and Halton expectations for students were being achieved. Thus, the new policy emphasised both reflective practice for personal accountability, and external accountability. The report also included a list of specific curriculum reviews that would occur over the next four years, and a series of questions that would be asked at each review. Review guidelines would subsequently be developed.

Three other key issues were incorporated into the policy. First, through the sampling of students' performance, data could be collected for the region while respecting the right of individual schools to select different processes for school-wide assessments. Additionally, matrix sampling would prevent politicians or other people from making invalid comparisons between schools while the system still lacked the capacity to examine the 'value-added' notion of progress.

Second, and related to this first issue, was a deliberately worded statement to ensure that assessment processes 'respect the intended use of the data', whether for programme planning, review, student diagnosis or feedback. Essentially, this was intended to protect schools from negative media or other attention, despite a recent Freedom of Information Act that gave any person access to whole schools' results by request. This was incorporated in response to anxiety expressed by some principals that the increased amount of data they now collected might find its way into the wrong hands.

Third, a statement was included to ensure that any assessment methods conformed with Halton's new Race and Ethnocultural Equity policy.

The assessment policy, due to go to the Board near the end of 1991, was held up because of the election of a large number of new political trustees and an impending budget process heavily impacted by a recession. The senior administration felt it important to delay the introduction of this new policy until such time that new trustees had a greater understanding of educational issues. This is a reality that has to be faced in many improvement efforts. Even though educators may understand, be supportive of and desire certain changes, it is a group of non-educators who ultimately make decisions as to what changes occur. This can also be seen in governmental changes such as those that have recently taken place within the Education Reform Act in Britain (see Chapter 10 for further discussion of political issues).

Assessment and evaluation continued to prove challenging within school growth planning. Further resources, therefore, needed to be provided to support schools in this area.

Resources for School Growth Planning

The importance of resources for school-based planning has been stressed elsewhere (Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan and Miles, 1992). During this period, the effectiveness indicators were refined, and school effectiveness questionnaires were finally developed.

Effectiveness Indicators and Handbook

Over the same period of time, the researcher and Task Force superintendent refined the list of indicators for each of the effectiveness characteristics (see Appendix H). These were circulated to a variety of interest groups for comments and amendments. Subsequently, they were used in three different ways. The first involved the incorporation of items related to instructional leaders into a questionnaire developed for use in the existing principal/vice principal evaluation process. Superintendents already rated the principal at the end of the year on a series of items and used this in their end-of-year discussions with the principal regarding performance and goals for the subsequent year. Bamburg and Andrews' (1989) work suggests that teachers' ratings of their principal as instructional leader are more accurate than those of superintendents. Furthermore, in schools of principals regarded by staff as instructional leaders, students, particularly those from ethnic backgrounds or disadvantaged families, make more academic gains than those in schools where the principal is not viewed by staff to be effective (Bamburg and Andrews, 1989). The new questionnaire was, therefore, designed for principals to give to their staff should they wish teacher feedback on their performance.

The second use of the indicators was their inclusion in a handbook for school growth planning teams. The file was divided into several sections, that included one for each effectiveness characteristic. Within each section, schools could find the indicator against which attainment of goals in that area could be measured. References to other relevant studies were also placed in that section, along with summaries of research and appropriate assessment and evaluation instruments for schools' use. As the School Growth Plan Team Training was developed (see later in this chapter), further sections were added that related to the specifics of

growth planning and process skills necessary to support the implementation of change within a school.

The third, and most far-reaching, use of the indicators was the development, by the researcher, of school effectiveness questionnaires for teachers and parents. These provided a means for schools to assess their current state, a vital component of school growth planning.

Effective Schools Questionnaire

As outlined in a previous chapter, it had been intended to produce a questionnaire for schools' use before this time. Unfortunately, due to other commitments and time constraints, this did not prove possible. By year three, however, it was felt that as schools set their own directions through the growth planning process, they needed to be aware of their particular context and needs, as noted elsewhere (Austin and Reynolds, 1990). The effective schools questionnaire for teachers was one way for schools to examine areas of strength and need. Lezotte (1990) comments:

> *"Perceptional surveys of the characteristics of Effective Schools, when coupled with other indicators of strengths and weaknesses, provide a valid base for school-based planning and school improvement . . . the data should not be used in a mechanical way, rather these survey data need to provide the basis for both reflection and sustained discourse . . .* (p. 198).

In early 1990, a teacher questionnaire was developed, using the effectiveness criteria described above (for a detailed description see Chapter 2). As a needs assessment instrument, the data from which would be used for future planning, it was deemed important for a school to examine both the current status and the importance placed on it in order to create an effective school. As schools analysed the gap in their responses between what they believed to be important and what they perceived to be happening currently, they would be able to identify their strengths and areas of need.

Once the instrument had been piloted and amended, it was made available for schools' use as one part of their assessment and self-evaluation process. Because each school was unique, spaces were left for schools to add five issues special to their own context.

The questionnaire was also reduced in size, and the wording of a few items amended slightly for use with parents. Two elementary schools

agreed to pilot the survey. The schools were instructed to send a covering letter to explain that this survey was produced at central office. Again, respondents were asked to make comments although few did.

As with the teacher questionnaire, there was little variation in response to the importance items, the vast majority of parents believing that the characteristics were essential to an effective school. The agreement scale showed more variety, particularly in terms of the 'uncertain' rating which was as high as 46 per cent on one item. This could imply a communication issue between the school and the home. Alternatively, it may have been inappropriate to ask parents to rate some of the items, on the assumption that they could not be expected to know everything that goes on in the school. After discussion with several principals and central office staff, it was felt appropriate to retain these items for further piloting. Meanwhile, several schools used the survey in the following year with similar results. It was, therefore, decided to conduct focus group interviews with parents and administrators to determine whether certain items should be deleted before it was used with a system sample. This was scheduled to occur after the completion of this research. Several schools, however, continued to use the parent surveys, believing them to be valid for their purposes.

It was also decided that the teacher surveys should be used to collect data from a sample of teachers throughout the system. This took place in the 1990-91 school year and will described in Chapters 7 and 8. Work to develop a student questionnaire was also held over until the following year.

In addition to resources for growth planning, staff development was a continuing focus.

Staff Development

In 1989-90, a Leadership Effectiveness Assisted by Peers programme was offered to consultative staff, and in 1990-91, School Growth Plan Team Training finally commenced.

Leadership Effectiveness Assisted by Peers (LEAP) for Support Staff

When the administrators' LEAP programme took place the previous year (see Chapter 5), existing coordinators and consultants expressed concern they had not been invited to participate. Consequently, a five-day programme was developed with Bennett, who provided much of the

training. This emphasised instructional strategies, because of their emphasis in the strategic plan and because it was these in which support staff would be most involved in their new roles. An interesting phenomenon occurred. While the series was perceived favourably by newly appointed consultants (see A Year of Transition later in this chapter) and many of those who regularly spent time with teachers in classrooms, most of the coordinators expressed resentment at not being asked to develop the training and share their own expertise. For many of these people, their current role largely involved curriculum development, and some had reputations throughout the system for rare appearances in schools. This has also been demonstrated elsewhere (Hall et al., 1985). There was an expectation that all consultative staff would attend LEAP. Several of these coordinators, however, did not, while others drifted in and out of sessions or challenged Bennett regularly. In hindsight, the programme developers felt it would have been beneficial to include one of these coordinators in the training's development. Furthermore, it appears that the expectation around attendance only served to increase resistance to the new school-based direction. While this was probably unwise, it should be reiterated that these very people had been the ones who felt excluded from the previous LEAP sessions. They had also received invitations to every principals' conference (see Chapter 5) where school effectiveness, leadership and the school growth planning process were introduced, but most chose not to attend. The complex issue of support staff within a change effort is addressed in Chapter 10.

School Growth Plan Team Training

The final piece of the Task Force's implementation puzzle was put into place with the development of a five-day workshop for school teams. This, in many ways, was overdue because most schools had been involved in growth planning for a year or more with only the handbook to guide them. Its delay, however, had benefits in that practitioner knowledge gained through growth planning could be incorporated into the training which was co-developed by school and system-based personnel. Furthermore, within the previous year, Halton staff developers had themselves been involved in a series of professional development activities directly related to this topic and were, therefore, able to incorporate many new relevant activities into the workshops.

When schools applied to come to the training series, it was stressed that an administrator should be part of the team (Watson et al., 1991) which would include four or five people with different roles and responsibilities.

Several schools also chose to bring a non school-based consultant with them. The other stipulation was that there should be a commitment to attend all sessions for the sake of continuity and group cohesiveness (see J. S. Barrett vignette).

The sessions were divided into two two-day and one one-day workshops, divided by a month between each to allow for practical application of techniques and theory. The workshop emphasised strategies to help teams work with colleagues back at school to conduct needs assessments, set goals, and implement and evaluate them. Particular emphasis was paid to necessary process skills for organisational development: that is, team-building, problem-solving, decision-making, conflict resolution, understanding change and people's reactions to it, and stages of adult development. Time was also devoted to the important prerequisites to planning discussed in Chapter 5, in particular the development of shared values and beliefs, a collaborative culture, and vision-building, as well as an understanding of school effectiveness, school improvement and the change process.

Trainers included the researcher, other system-based consultants and school principals. Several schools were invited to share experiences. Time for planning within school teams was built in, and schools paired up to share ideas and receive feedback. The trainers also offered themselves as an ongoing resource to schools, many of whom took up these offers to provide support in the area of assessment, goal-setting or vision-building.

Occasional networking meetings after school were and continue to be arranged for the 24 teams in the first two series of training. A third series commenced in March, 1992.

During the first few months of 1989-90, the Task Force superintendent worked with the director and other superintendents to clarify the reorganisation of support staff.

A Year of Transition

Generally, uncertainty and anxiety levels were high during the first few months of 1989-90. The third part of the Board report was revised several times. Every revision was shared with key groups in the system, in particular the teacher federations who represented support staff. Each time, it was found wanting in one or more areas. Concessions had to be made. Meanwhile, it had been anticipated that reporting relationships

between consultative staff and superintendents would be outlined at an early stage, but this did not occur, in part due to the uncertainty about reorganisation. This added to the stress already being experienced by some staff members.

Finally, in January 1990 the Board supported the reorganisation of support staff. Some significant changes had been made: permanent positions for all existing staff; greater specification of role descriptions; retention of the titles 'coordinator' and 'consultant'; and three coordinators to lead the elementary area teams. Over the next couple of months, hiring of staff occurred and existing consultants chose the area where they wished to work.

The four Instructional Services superintendents worked regularly with a facilitator to clarify their own roles and relationships. This proved difficult as three had previously worked in specialist areas to which they were committed. Furthermore, two had been hired at a time when collaboration was not an expectation of their role, an issue that also applied to several support staff. Consequently, the 'letting go' of personal agendas and power were inhibiting factors. This group considered sharing roles and responsibilities, but by the end of the year agreed it was more profitable to work in their own area of strength. Perhaps this was for the best, as each brought specific skills and expertise to the job. Nonetheless, from this point on, for a couple of years, they did not appear to work as closely together, met less regularly and, for a while, drifted back into their separate roles. Thus, despite pressure on them from support staff to make their plans clear, they were engaged in their own struggles and uncertainty. The complications of the change process are examined in Chapter 10.

The remainder of the 1989-90 year was devoted to bringing all the groups together as a team and trying to ensure connections. To this end, a linkage group was set up. Initially, its membership was to consist of: coordinators, who represented curriculum, special education, staff development and school-based planning; seconded principals; and a superintendent to coordinate the group. After one meeting, some other superintendents were anxious about being left out of the decision-making process. This again demonstrated power relationships at work. At future meetings, all of the superintendents and the director were also present.

The objectives of the meetings were to:

- develop a common vision of how Toward 2000 would be implemented;
- outline actions needed to achieve this vision;
- plan timing and sequence of the next six months' actions; and
- identify interrelationships among teams and team members, and establish communication links.

The director reminded the group of the need for accountability:

> *"Our trustees have taken a giant leap of faith, and we have to demonstrate to them that we are making an impact. We need to gather data."*

As the group discussed current preparations of the various new groups, it was clear that these groups were at different stages of readiness to service the schools the following year. Furthermore, different areas used different strategies. There was concern that the new organisation might lead to several smaller school systems, although it was agreed that the areas would need to experiment to establish more effective delivery models. Other concerns centred on potential lack of communication, accountability, and how to measure effectiveness. Thus, the superintendents finally began to address some of the key issues examined by the Task Force several years before. Apparently, until the change actually became real for them, they had not perceived the necessity for some of the rhetoric that came out of the Task Force. This confirms Fullan's (1991a) theory about the personal meaning of change.

It was agreed that a smaller linkage team of School and Instructional Services coordinators would work on the issues and develop an implementation plan. The larger group would meet three times a year to check on progress and give feedback.

At the end of 1989-90, consultants had been hired, assigned to specific schools and all of the groups were preparing to respond to requests from schools in September 1990.

Implementation of Toward 2000

Over the 1990-91 school year, the new organisation, as envisaged in Toward 2000, commenced. Several issues surfaced quickly. In the attempt to ensure that consultants would be visible in schools after considerable expenditure of taxpayers' money to hire them, two areas mandated that consultants should spend 80 per cent of their time in schools. The inflexibility of this arrangement did not take into account that quality of service was more important than quantity (Louis and

Miles, 1990), and inhibited time for collaboration, planning and professional development as well as flexible arrangements to meet specific schools' needs. Furthermore, consultants with specialty skills were often unable to use them, while they struggled to learn new generalist skills. In addition, although many of the new hirees possessed excellent instruction and consulting skills, some existing staff who had been moved into new roles were not as successful and had difficulty establishing credibility in their schools.

Few of the support staff were familiar with the growth planning process, effective schools research, or the impact of school culture. Although the system had offered workshops on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Loucks and Hall, 1979) for several years, most of the consultative staff were still unclear as to its implications for change and their roles within schools. Increasingly, they began to request to see 'the big picture'. Arrangements were, therefore, made for voluntary professional development sessions for support staff on school effectiveness, school improvement, culture, change and their relationship to school growth planning.

Examples From Schools

From the start of the 1989-90 year, schools were beginning to be more actively involved in growth planning and to deal with the prerequisites for a more successful experience. In the first vignette, the development of a supportive climate and mission statement at Oaklands Middle School are described. Some of the difficulties associated with growth planning at J. S. Barrett High School are outlined in the second vignette.

Oaklands Middle School

When the new principal and vice principal arrived at Oaklands in September 1989, it had a reputation of being a difficult school. Drawing from a mixed community of 'haves and have nots', the school served 280 pupils in grades 7 and 8 (ages 12 to 14). After having interviewed every teacher, the principal and vice principal perceived the orientation of the school to be somewhat traditional, with a polite staff who *"did not really deal with the issues"*. There appeared to be a lot of dissatisfaction with teaching assignments, so the new administrators made immediate changes in that area and *"gave everybody the teaching assignments they wanted"*.

In the early days, they tried to model collaboration, always operating as a team, and made themselves visible and available to staff and students through an open-door policy, involvement in sports and other activities, and visiting classrooms. In the first October, they also shared their vision for the school: *"We said, this is where we're coming from. This is what we believe"*. They also emphasised their belief that teachers were professionals to be trusted and respected. In addition, they brought in lunch for the staff on professional development days and ordered rugger shirts for everyone, in the attempt to promote a more relaxed, cohesive atmosphere.

As a follow-up to the personal interview, the principal and vice principal took the staff through a process to identify everything positive about the school and those areas that needed more attention. These topics were brought back regularly to staff meetings for discussion and clarification. Gradually, they began to formulate their thoughts in several statements, which were collapsed, and shortened. The staff as a group eventually settled on **'We Care. We Share. We Dare'**. The staff were generally happy with their new mission statement. As one noted:

> *". . . the way we work together . . . the sharing of ideas, where everybody can make a contribution, whether it be with regards to rules, attitudes. That everybody feels free to express their opinion about things."*

Although the majority of staff were committed to and understood the statement, they all felt it important that the pupils 'buy into' it as well. The principal and vice principal, therefore, organised the timetable such that the principal would work with all of the pupils five times while the vice principal worked with teachers or vice versa. Teachers then worked with students during several pastoral sessions to develop posters related to the statement, so they could also think about the words and give them personal meaning. According to one teacher, this activity also helped to bring on board a couple of less committed teachers.

Parents had already been requested for input through a survey that had asked what they believed the school should represent. Communication with them of the new statement took a variety of forms: newsletters; letterheads; badges; the students' posters around the school; presentations; and parents' meetings.

Both the principal and individual teachers talked of how they used the statement as a measuring stick to which they could refer. If a pupil had a

discipline problem he or she would be asked: *"What do we believe in our school?"*

Generally, the teachers believed that their mission statement served a useful purpose at school although a couple, when interviewed, commented that they would have behaved in the same way with or without the mission statement. Nonetheless, they did feel that it gave them a focus or direction. As two noted:

> *"It helps you focus, and if you have a goal I think that's always helpful. If you didn't have a mission statement, a goal or focus, you could easily say 'Why are we here anyway?' Yes, it's important."*
>
> *"I've come to the realisation that if we don't have something focused up there then we really don't come back to it all the time."*

For this school, growth planning was generally rewarding. The next vignette describes a school experience that was very different.

J. S. Barrett High School

The development of aims and objectives was not new to teachers at J. S. Barrett, a 1400-student high school. Historically, however, the development process had not been highly participatory and the annual discussion of aims was viewed by teachers as a public relations exercise. Furthermore, little was done once objectives had been set.

With the advent of school growth planning the principal, one of the few secondary principals who actively used course selection and attendance data from the student administrative system, was an early advocate of data-based planning. In October 1990, J. S. Barrett was the first secondary school to administer the effective schools questionnaire to all of its teachers. A vice principal coordinated this exercise and from these results alone, immediately highlighted 10 areas that required attention. Staff were asked to choose a committee. The 10 committees were scheduled to meet three times each, during lunch periods. In this time, they had to come up with a series of activities to address the problem areas. Several weeks later, the vice principal called the researcher to ask her what the next step should be. During their discussion, it became clear that the school currently had no plan, nor had it gone through most of the prerequisites engaged in by other administrators prior to or in the early stages of growth planning. In addition, the principal had requested

that attitude data be collected through effective schools questionnaires from students and parents. The vice principal also felt that the teachers were now enthusiastic about their chosen areas, and would not want these to be changed or else credibility would be lost. In short, the school had jumped into a rudimentary form of planning with little knowledge of the process. Although the principal had registered for the LEAP programme, he had missed several sessions. The researcher offered several ideas and suggested the school send a team to the School Growth Plan Team Training to learn more about the process. The school did not attend this series because of concerns on the principal's part that it might contain too much 'Halton jargon' that would alienate his fairly traditional staff, but registered for the next series six months later, on recommendation from several other secondary schools that had attended. In the meantime the school continued to work on their 10 areas.

Based on the evaluation (Watson et al., 1991) of a Learning Consortium school improvement workshop run by a co-author of a high school study (Louis and Miles, 1990), the Team Training planners had requested that all schools send a cross-role team, to include one administrator. Additionally, to ensure continuity, all team members had to attend every session. J. S. Barrett sent four staff, including the same vice principal, and their school's instructional consultant. Over the five-day training, only one teacher came to all sessions. The vice principal came for the whole of the first day, then parts of the second, third and fourth days. Two other teachers came for two days, then were replaced by a variety of teachers over the third and fourth days, and the consultant was also only there for two days. An observation of this team, compared with the other 12 school teams, showed that they constantly had to review issues for new people, and that the vice principal dominated the process whenever he was there. On the final day, the teacher who had attended all sessions, and had taken external courses in organisational development, broke down in tears of frustration as she watched other secondary school teams actively engaged in discussion, problem-solving and planning.

At the time the research ended, the school had administered its parental and student questionnaires, and the superintendent for staff development had visited the school to talk to the principal about the Team Training and to offer assistance.

This vignette demonstrates some of the frustrations of growth planning, as well as its complexity and the need to take people's stage of awareness into account. The 'over-zealousness' and erratic behaviour of a vice

principal, lacking the support of a principal comfortable with the change process, led to unchanneled staff energy which had the potential to lead to cynicism if this thrust, like many before it, just became an 'exercise'.

Summary of School Years 1989-90 and 1990-91

In many ways 1989-90 was a year of frustration and uncertainty. The reorganisation influenced by the Effective Schools Project had meant significant changes for people throughout the system. Many of those in central office support and leadership roles were unclear as to what their new roles would entail, and some demonstrated unwillingness to change. The following year saw more clarity as new structures were developed, people moved into their new roles and learned by 'getting on with the job.'

By the end of the 1989-90 school year, schools were familiar with the Building a School Growth Plan handbook and possessed the implementation profile and list of effective schools indicators. Many schools were already involved in school growth planning but, by their own admission, unclear of how to get started, involve teachers, or maintain momentum for an extended period of time. The School Growth Plan Team Training offered in 1990-91 was developed to help with this process.

The area of assessment proved problematic, both to schools and the system. Although many schools were, by now, growth planning, few used any data during the assessment phase. It was hoped that the development of the school effectiveness questionnaires would be one means to help schools focus in more depth on data collection. Meanwhile, however, those at system level were unable to develop an overall assessment policy that was meaningful for the politicians and the system in general. It was clearly necessary to 'come to grips' with assessment, and the end of the 1989-90 school year brought renewed commitment from the director to evaluate the changes being made. The period commencing with the 1990-91 school year was one in which the schools began to use effective schools questionnaires as part of their needs assessment process, and a clearer assessment policy was developed for the system. In this year, the first measurement of the impact of the Effective Schools Project on teachers and schools was carried out through the administration of an effective schools questionnaire to teachers throughout the system. Chapter 7 focuses on the results in the elementary schools, while secondary school results are given in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 7

What was the Impact of the Effective Schools Project on the Elementary Schools?

In this chapter the results of the effective schools questionnaire distributed in late January 1991 to 20 per cent of teachers in every elementary school are examined. (For details of its development, see Chapters 2 and 6, and Appendices A2 and B.) A case profile of one elementary school illustrates these results and some of the key themes that underlie school growth planning (see Appendix D1). The case profile is compiled from the results of the effective schools questionnaire, administered to all staff in the school and completed by 83 per cent, an effective schools questionnaire completed by 55 parents, and individual interviews carried out with the principal and seven teachers.

The Elementary Effective Schools Questionnaire Results

Results will be presented in two sections and will focus on percentages of teachers agreeing with items and rating them as important. In the first section, overall comments will be made, and the areas of highest and lowest agreement given. The second section will look at the results in more depth as they relate to each of the areas and characteristics of effectiveness (see Chapter 3 and Appendix E for descriptions of these).

For the purposes of reporting, the original five response categories for percentages of agreement (A) and importance (B) have been collapsed into three categories as follows:

A	=	Strongly agree/agree	= Agree
		Uncertain	= Uncertain
		Strongly disagree/ Disagree	= Disagree
B	=	Crucial/important	= Important
		Fairly important	= Less important
		Not very important/ Not at all important	= Unimportant

Sample

Surveys were sent with covering letters to a randomly selected 20 per cent of staff at every elementary school. Of 319 questionnaires distributed, 288 were returned, which represents a very high response rate of 90 per cent.

Overall Results

Generally, the results of this survey were very positive. In 62 of the items, that is three-quarters, 80 per cent of staff or more were in agreement that this characteristic was observable in their school. In their responses, the teachers also appeared to validate the importance of these characteristics of effective schooling. In only four items was there less than 80 per cent agreement that the characteristic was important to the creation of an effective school.

The items showing the highest agreement among respondents are given in Table 2.

It appears from the results in Table 2 that elementary staff saw their schools as places where learning took place and was enhanced through a variety of activities. They also believed that learning included the adults in schools who were engaged in ongoing professional development. Relationships with students, parents and support staff were perceived to be good and of importance. Halton elementary schools were seen as welcoming places where administrators were accessible to discuss curriculum and instruction.

There were relatively few items with which the level of agreement was lower (see Table 3). Most notably, these included student and parental input with regard to programme and decision-making, although relatively less importance was attached to the idea of such involvement. Lower agreement levels were also evident in the area of communication about assessment and evaluation. It should be noted, however, that there was also some uncertainly in this area (see section on Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress). While high levels of uncertainty in responses do not mean that people disagree that a characteristic exists at their school, they can indicate a lack of communication or discussion regarding this characteristic. Indeed, several teachers commented that they did not know what other teachers did in their classrooms and, therefore, could only respond from their own experience (see, also, secondary findings in Chapter 8).

Table 2
Characteristics reflecting highest percentage agreement, in priority order - elementary teachers

Statements	% Agreement (N = 288)	% Importance (N= 288)
People in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents.	96	99
Teachers treat students fairly and with respect.	95	100
The primary purpose of this school is teaching and learning.	95	95
Students are given opportunities to take on extra jobs and responsibilities in the school.	95	88
The atmosphere in this school encourages learning.	93	100
Students' work is prominently displayed.	93	96
The staff encourage parents and community members to help out in the school.	93	89
Teachers in this school work with support staff (school based and external) to enhance student learning.	92	97
Teachers consistently treat students with understanding, caring and concern.	91	99
Teachers work to enhance students' self-concept.	91	99
Student progress is regularly and systematically monitored and assessed.	91	98
Staff in this school really care about how much **all** students learn.	91	98
Learning activities are related to learning objectives and outcomes.	91	97
The administrative team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.	91	95
A wide variety of resources are used to facilitate student learning.	90	99
New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	90	99
The administrative team communicates high expectations to teachers, students, parents and community.	90	98
Teachers in this school are involved in ongoing professional development experiences.	90	94

Table 3
Characteristics reflecting lowest percentage agreement, in reverse order - elementary teachers

Statements	% Agreement (N=288)	% Importance (N-228)
The physical condition of this school is attractive, clean and well kept.	74	96
Teachers and students work together to make rules governing behaviour in the classroom.	74	89
Achievement expectations are communicated to all students and parents.	73	92
Successes of teachers are recognized.	72	93
The staff is committed to the school's mission.	72	92
School goals are regularly reviewed by the staff.	72	88
The school encourages feedback from parents about the quality of the program.	71	83
Curriculum planning ensures that key skills are reinforced across grade levels and courses.	70	95
High levels of trust and mutual respect exist in this school.	69	99
The administrative team spends time in classrooms observing instruction.	67	76
Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.	62	92
Student assessment information is used to give specific feedback to students.	58	84
Disruptions of learning time are few.	54	88
Teachers communicate to students how and why evaluation methods are used.	53	87
Students in this school have a say in school decisions that affect them.	51	68
Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.	48	60

Results for Areas and Characteristics of Effectiveness

A Common Mission

In Halton's effective schools characteristics model, the broader area of a common mission incorporated three sub-categories: shared values and beliefs; clear goals; and instructional leadership.

Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed with the indicators reflected in 'a common mission' and those who considered them important.

Table 4
A common mission — percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
This school has a clearly articulated mission (philosophy).	A	82	10	7
	B	89	9	2
The staff is committed to the school's mission.	A	72	20	7
	B	92	7	1
The staff is committed to change, growth and improvement.	A	82	14	4
	B	99	1	0

***Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

There was a high level of agreement and little disagreement among staff that their school had a well-articulated mission or philosophy, although some uncertainty as to whether all staff were committed to it. Generally, however, people felt that it was of importance that their school should have a mission to which people were committed. There was also little question in people's minds that change, growth and improvement were desirable. Ninety-nine per cent of respondents considered this a necessary ingredient of an effective school.

Shared Beliefs and Values

All of the indicators highlighted in the section on shared beliefs and values were perceived to be important (see Table 5). Whereas there was a strong feeling that new staff were welcomed in school and a belief by most

people that staff participated in shared decision-making, there was less consensus regarding the existence of high levels of trust and mutual respect in their school. The importance of trust and respect, as well as involvement in decision-making is discussed in the case profile (see Appendix D1).

Table 5
Shared values and beliefs — percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
People in this school work together as a team.	A	79	13	8
	B	98	2	1
School events and activities reinforce school values.	A	89	8	3
	B	96	3	1
Staff participate in shared decision-making.	A	82	12	6
	A	94	6	0
High levels of trust and mutual respect exist in this school.	A	69	21	10
	B	99	1	0
New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	A	90	7	3
	B	99	1	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Those who added further comments were very positive, as the following two quotes demonstrate:

> *"This school has a very positive school culture. Staff are very supportive of one another and work in teams to plan exciting activities for kids beyond the classroom."*

> *"The feeling in our school is one of a large family, mutually supportive, caring and growing in every way, working together to solve problems . . ."*

Clear Goals

Within two years of the school growth planning process being introduced, the majority of elementary staff already believed that their school had developed clear goals (see Table 6). Furthermore, there was almost unanimous agreement that it was important for a school to have goals to

which staff were committed. Activities that reinforced the goals were also seen by most staff to be taking place. Slightly fewer, although still more than three-quarters, felt that planning was a whole-school collaborative process, that goals were shared with the community, and that these goals were important. Given that staff involvement in school growth planning had only occurred over the previous two years in many schools, it is a positive result that the majority of respondents already felt that planning was collaborative.

Table 6
Clear goals - percentage responses - total elementary sample

		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Statements				
The school has developed a set of clearly stated goals.	A	84	12	5
	B	96	4	0
Planning is a collaborative process involving all staff.	A	77	14	9
	B	91	7	2
Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.	A	48	35	16
	B	60	33	7
Staff consider the school goals important.	A	75	20	5
	B	93	7	0
Activities throughout the school (classroom, co-curricular/ extra-curricular, special events) support and reinforce school goals.	A	86	13	1
	B	93	7	1
School goals are shared with the school community.	A	75	21	4
	B	87	12	1
School goals are regularly reviewed by the staff.	A	72	17	11
	B	88	11	1
Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.	A	62	32	6
	B	91	8	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Regular review and monitoring of goals were seen to occur by many respondents, although fewer thought that evaluation methods of successful goal achievement were incorporated within their plan. There was considerable uncertainty (32%) regarding this issue, which was borne out in the case profile (see Appendix D1). There was also

uncertainty around the involvement of parents, students and community members in the growth planning process. From these results, it appears that in early 1991 many schools did not involve people beyond the school in this process. Teachers were also less committed to the idea of requesting input from parents, students and community members for the school growth plan (40% felt this was not very important). This finding was supported by later results in the areas of student and parental involvement. The issue of power relationships in schools (Ball, 1987; Sarason, 1990) is discussed in Chapter 10.

Instructional Leadership

The results on instructional leadership were generally impressive (see Table 7). This was reflected in one teacher's comment:

> *"I believe the administrative team sets the tone for almost everything that happens within a school . . . Luckily, I feel I have the support and understanding of a superior group of people who care for kids and staff. This helps me to enjoy what I do, and this reflects itself in what learning experiences I can provide my students."*

There was a belief that the principal and vice principal(s) communicated clearly their vision for the school's future. As one respondent noted:

> *". . . I have only great respect and admiration for the administrative team in this school. There is a very clear perception of what an effective school is; the ability to identify relevant and related goals and directions and the skills and leadership to guide and support a very intense staff."*

The administrative team was also seen to be visible and accessible. In the areas of curriculum and instruction, most teachers viewed their administrators as knowledgeable and as making use of the appraisal process - Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (C S and E) - to help improve instruction. Slightly fewer felt that the principal and vice principal(s) placed priority on curriculum and instruction. The indicator with least agreement was that relating to classroom observation. Only two-thirds of teachers reported that their administrative team observed classroom instruction. This was, however, one of the few indicators of effectiveness addressed in this survey that a lower percentage of teachers (76%) believed to be a necessary component of an effective school. It would appear that in Canada, as well as in Britain, there are teachers who either believe that there is no necessity for them to be appraised or who are uncomfortable with having another adult in their classroom.

Table 7
Instructional leadership - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The administrative team communicates a clear vision of where the school is going.	A	83	11	6
	B	98	2	1
The administrative team communicates high expectations to teachers, students, parents and community.	A	90	8	2
	B	98	2	0
The administrative team is 'visible' throughout the school to both staff and students.	A	90	4	6
	B	99	1	0
The administrative team communicates openly and frankly with staff, students and parents.	A	86	9	5
	B	99	1	0
The administrative team places priority on curriculum and instructional issues.	A	76	16	8
	B	86	14	1
The administrative team promotes collaborative problem-solving and conflict resolution.	A	82	13	4
	B	95	4	1
The administrative team takes part in school-based staff development.	A	89	8	3
	B	94	5	1
The administrative team promotes development activities for staff.	A	86	11	3
	B	92	8	1
The administrative team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.	A	91	7	2
	B	95	5	1
The administrative team spends time in classrooms observing instruction.	A	67	18	15
	B	76	20	4
The administrative team is knowledgeable about instructional resources.	A	82	14	3
	B	89	10	1
The administrative team uses the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (CS & E) process to assist in the improvement of instruction.	A	84	13	3
	B	80	17	3

***Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Emphasis on Learning

The indicators in this section focused on the emphasis on learning, frequent monitoring of students' progress, high expectations, teacher collegiality and development, and a focus on curriculum and instruction.

Within an emphasis on learning was almost unanimous agreement that the primary purpose of respondents' schools was teaching and learning (see Table 8).

Table 8
Emphasis on learning - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The primary purpose of this school is teaching and learning.	A	95	4	1
	B	95	4	1
Staff in this school really care about how much **all** students learn.	A	91	6	3
	B	98	2	0
Teachers in this school believe that **all** students can learn and be successful.	A	83	13	4
	B	97	2	1
Teachers in this school work with support staff (school-based and external) to enhance student learning.	A	92	5	3
	B	97	3	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

The belief was also strong that staff cared how much every student learned, although a minority of respondents (13%) were not sure whether teachers in their school believed that all students could learn and be successful. Although this was a small percentage, it could have had implications for equity within the classroom (see, also, the section on High Expectations).

Teachers felt they should be working together with school-based and external support staff, and also believed that it was happening. As one respondent noted:

"We used to feel 'alone' and threatened by supervisory staff . .

Now the principal, consultants and colleagues are all so helpful."

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

The results in the area of monitoring of progress showed some diversity. The majority of respondents thought that student progress was monitored and assessed regularly and systematically, using a variety of assessment and evaluation methods, and that parents regularly received both formal and informal progress reports (see Table 9). Most also felt that assessment results were used by teachers for subsequent planning.

Table 9
Frequent monitoring of students' progress - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Student progress is regularly and systematically monitored and assessed.	A	91	8	1
	B	98	1	1
Student progress is monitored through a variety of methods of assessment and evaluation.	A	87	12	1
	B	98	2	1
Teachers use assessment results to plan appropriate instruction and curriculum priorities.	A	75	23	2
	B	97	3	0
Teachers communicate to students how and why evaluation methods are used.	A	53	41	5
	B	88	10	3
Student assessment information is used to give specific feedback to students.	A	58	37	5
	B	84	13	2
Formal and informal progress reports are given to parents regularly.	A	87	11	2
	B	95	4	1

***Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

In contrast, fewer staff thought that teachers communicated to students the reason for and methods of assessment, and a roughly similar number felt that specific feedback of assessment information was given to students. Few teachers disagreed with these indicators. Rather, there was a high level of uncertainty as to whether these forms of

communication occurred. This suggests that the details of assessment and evaluation procedures may have been a less frequent topic of discussion among teachers, and therefore many did not feel able to respond to the indicators with certainty. It is clear, nonetheless, from teachers' responses to the importance scales on each of the items, that monitoring and assessment of students' progress was considered a key component of school effectiveness. Assessment and evaluation have been themes throughout this research and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10. It appears, however, that lack of comfort with assessment at system level was mirrored in the schools. This is also demonstrated in the case profile (see Appendix D1).

High Expectations

There was little doubt that expectations were important, although some uncertainty as to whether achievement expectations were communicated to all students and parents. As Table 10 demonstrates, between 70 and 80 per cent of the respondents agreed with each of the three items that addressed high expectations. Although relatively high, this is not as high as the responses to many other indicators. Again, low levels of disagreement and higher percentages of 'uncertain' responses suggest that this might have been a communication issue although, equally, it could have been concerned with equity. Either way, it was an issue for the system to address.

Table 10
High expectations - percentage responses - total elementary sample

		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Statements				
Challenging and attainable standards for achievement are set and maintained for **all** students.	A	78	17	5
	B	98	2	0
Achievement expectations are communicated to **all** students and parents.	A	73	23	4
	B	92	8	0
All students are treated in ways which emphasize success and potential rather than failures and shortcomings.	A	78	17	5
	B	98	2	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Teacher Collegiality and Development

Results in the area of teacher collegiality and development suggested that the emphasis on collaboration within Halton over the previous three years (for example, the Collaborative Planning Network) had had an impact. Not only had several schools selected collaborative planning as a growth plan goal but 80 per cent of respondents reported that staff in their schools regularly collaborated to plan programmes of work (see Table 11). Slightly fewer, although still more than three-quarters, felt that teachers regularly shared skills and strategies. From responses to this survey, Halton elementary teachers appeared to be consumers of professional development and opportunities that would enhance their repertoire of curriculum and instructional strategies. They also appeared to believe that ongoing learning and collaboration were necessary prerequisites to an effective school.

Table 11
Teacher collegiality and development - percentage responses - total elementary sample

		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Statements				
Teachers in this school are involved in ongoing professional development experiences.	A	90	7	3
	B	94	5	1
Teachers in this school consistently look for ways to improve their knowledge of curriculum and instructional techniques.	A	83	13	4
	B	97	3	0
Staff regularly collaborate to plan curriculum and instruction.	A	80	11	9
	B	93	7	1
Teachers regularly share teaching skills and strategies.	A	77	16	7
	B	94	6	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Focus on Instruction and Curriculum

It appeared that Halton elementary teachers believed there was an active focus on curriculum and instruction in their schools (see Table 12). The majority reported that learning activities were related to objectives and

outcomes, and that learning and growth were facilitated through a wide variety of resources, teaching strategies and motivational techniques. All of these aspects of teaching were also considered highly important. There was less certainty whether reinforcement of key skills across grade levels and courses occurred, although it was considered as important as the other indicators of a curriculum and instructional focus. Curricula in Ontario are not developed by teachers within their schools, although they sometimes participate in writing teams that develop curricula for the system. This lack of involvement in curriculum development, added to a system in which stages are clearly defined (primary=kindergarten to grade 3; junior=grades 4 to 6; intermediate=grades 7 to 9; senior=grades 10 to 13), may mean that a teacher could go through her or his career working with one age group and never know how what she or he does builds on the previous year's work or impacts that of the subsequent year.

Table 12
Focus on instruction and curriculum - percentages responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Learning activities are related to learning objectives and outcomes.	A	91	7	2
	B	98	3	0
A wide variety of resources are used to facilitate student learning.	A	90	8	2
	B	99	1	0
Curriculum planning ensures that key skills are reinforced across grade levels and courses.	A	70	25	5
	B	95	5	1
Teachers use a wide variety of teaching skills and strategies.	A	87	11	2
	B	99	1	0
Teachers use a variety of motivational techniques to promote student learning and growth.	A	86	12	2
	B	99	1	0
Disruptions of learning time are few.	A	54	20	26
	B	88	10	2

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

The one area where disagreement was strongly evident was that relating to disruptions of learning time. Over a quarter of respondents felt that learning time was frequently disrupted. A further fifth were uncertain. It should be noted, however, that this was not perceived as the most

important indicator of an instructional and curriculum focus. This, perhaps, is more an indicator of a climate conducive to learning (see Appendix B). Effective pilot schools paid attention to such details early on, so that they would not impinge on the growth planning process (see Climate Setting in Chapter 5).

A Climate Conducive to Learning

The items in this section of Halton's model and the questionnaire examined a climate conducive to learning, student involvement and responsibility, physical environment, recognition and incentives, positive student behaviour, and parental and community involvement and support.

Evidently, most respondents felt their schools offered a climate conducive to learning, not only for students, but for themselves as well (see Table 13).

Table 13
A climate conducive to learning - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The atmosphere in this school encourages learning.	A	93	5	2
	B	100	1	0
A positive feeling permeates this school.	A	84	11	5
	B	100	0	0
Students in this school are enthusiastic about learning.	A	80	15	5
	B	99	1	0
Teachers like working in this school.	A	82	12	6
	B	99	1	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Of all of the characteristics, this was the one in which there was an almost unanimous belief that all of the indicators were important features of an effective school. The majority of respondents believed that teachers enjoyed working in their school, and almost all felt that the school's atmosphere promoted learning. A small minority (15%) were unsure as to whether students in their school were enthusiastic about learning, although most of the rest reported student enthusiasm. It would be beneficial for schools to examine students' attitudes and self-concepts to

find out from students themselves whether they are enthusiastic about learning. A change in mindset is still required with regard to the possibilities inherent in the assessment of students' social development. Current educational reform in Britain and elsewhere neglects the assessment of the social outcomes of schooling. Since the completion of this research Halton has piloted a self-concept questionnaire for elementary students.

Student Involvement and Responsibility

Results on student involvement and responsibility demonstrated that teachers perceived students to be involved in their learning and schooling in most ways, as is shown in Table 14. The comment of one teacher illustrates these results:

> *"Students speak highly of their accomplishments and appear well adjusted to the challenges and extra-curricular activities presented."*

Table 14
Student involvement and responsibility - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Students in this school are encouraged to think for themselves.	A	87	11	2
	B	98	2	0
Students in this school have a say in school decisions that affect them.	A	51	34	15
	B	68	29	3
Students are given opportunities to take on extra jobs and responsibilities in the school.	A	95	4	1
	B	88	11	1
Students in this school see themselves as able, responsible and valuable.	A	83	14	3
	B	97	2	1
There is a well organized co-curricular extra-curricular activities program in the school.	A	89	6	5
	B	89	10	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Teachers believed there were plenty of opportunities for students to take on extra responsibilities, to participate in extra-curricular activities, and to

think for themselves. Also, the majority felt that students had positive self-perceptions. A few, however, noted increasing pressures on students and highlighted a need for further guidance and counselling.

Slightly more respondents thought that students were given extra jobs and responsibilities in their school (95%) than felt it necessary for them to be given these extra duties (88%), although this difference was not significant.

One indicator produced less agreement, and considerable uncertainty. Only half of the respondents reported that students in their school had a say in school decisions that might affect them. This reiterates the response pattern regarding student input into the growth planning process. Looking at the percentages for importance, however, it appeared that teachers were not convinced of the necessity for student involvement in school decision-making. Power distribution is a key issue discussed in Chapter 10.

Physical Environment

Respondents were more positive concerning aspects of the physical environment over which they had control than those over which they did not. Whereas a minority of people thought that the school building was not attractive, clean or well-kept, almost all reported that students' work was displayed throughout the school and the majority felt that attention was devoted to the regular updating of attractive display areas (see Table 15).

Table 15
Physical environment - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The physical condition of the school is attractive, clean and well-kept.	A	73	12	15
	B	97	3	0
Students' work is prominently displayed.	A	93	4	3
	B	96	3	1
A lot of attention is given to keeping bulletin boards and other display areas attractive and up-to-date.	A	86	8	6
	B	87	12	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Again, almost all of respondents rated the physical environment highly in terms of its importance, although a few teachers were not convinced of the necessity for attractive displays. The physical environment as a symbol of change and respect is discussed in the elementary case profile (see Appendix D1).

Recognition and Incentives

Recognition and incentives were seen as important indicators of an effective school by almost all respondents (see Table 16). Generally, teachers believed their school offered many opportunities for reward and recognition, although less than three-quarters felt that their own and colleagues' successes were recognised. Lortie (1975) describes the inherent pleasure and satisfaction teachers gain by working with students as 'psychic rewards'. Clearly, though, teachers also need to feel valued for what they do. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) note that the real challenge for the principal is to find something to value in every teacher; an opportunity to praise the teacher and raise self-esteem. They point out, *"Good elementary teachers do this with their students, and principals should do likewise with their teachers"* (p. 87). This issue is illustrated in the case profile (see Appendix D1).

Table 16
Recognition and incentives - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
There are many opportunities for reward and recognition throughout the school.	A	84	11	5
	B	95	5	0
Programs to recognize students' achievement reflect school values.	A	78	17	4
	B	94	6	0
Teachers praise **all** students for their accomplishments rather than only those who accomplish the most.	A	79	17	4
	B	98	2	0
Teachers work to enhance students' self-concept.	A	91	6	3
	B	99	1	0
Successes of teachers are recognized.	A	72	17	11
	B	93	7	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

The vast majority of respondents thought that teachers enhanced the self-concepts of students, and several teachers pointed out the importance of this, as these two quotes demonstrate:

> *"Our staff feels that a child's self-esteem is the most important aspect of his education. Without self-esteem, learning becomes a very difficult thing to obtain."*

> *"Self-concept is very important and I feel equal to teaching and learning in the school. Without a positive self-concept, it is very difficult to learn and progress."*

Not everyone was sure that all students were equally praised for their accomplishments. This confirmed similar findings in the section on high expectations. Equity is a major feature of school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte and Bancroft, 1985; Reynolds and Creemers, 1990), and has been examined in a variety of ways in recent years in Halton, leading to an Ethnocultural Policy, similar policies in some schools, and an Equity Network. Levels of uncertainty in response to some of the equity questions on this survey, however, suggested that this was an area where further discussion was needed in schools.

Positive Student Behaviour

In the section on positive student behaviour, as elsewhere, there was less certainty that students were or should be involved in making decisions regarding rules governing their classroom behaviour (see Table 17 and discussion in Chapter 10). This aside, all other indicators of student behaviour were viewed as important components of an effective school.

Teachers believed that adults in the school consistently treated students fairly and with respect, understanding and concern. They saw their schools as places of caring where people worked together to resolve problems. Most also thought that their school had a clearly stated behaviour code, and clear, consistent rules and expectations. This proved to be important in the pilot schools as a precursor to growth planning. Several incorporated the development of a behaviour policy as a goal in their early growth planning attempts. Once this had been implemented, however, it freed them to focus on the more meaningful areas of curriculum and instruction (see, also, the case profile in Appendix D1).

Table 17
Positive student behaviour - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The school has a clearly stated behaviour code.	A	83	8	9
	B	99	1	1
The school has clear, consistent rules and expectations.	A	79	10	11
	B	100	1	0
Staff and students work together to solve problems.	A	80	13	7
	B	97	2	1
Teachers treat students fairly and with respect.	A	95	4	1
	B	100	0	0
Teachers consistently treat students with understanding, caring and concern.	A	91	7	2
	B	99	1	0
Teachers and students work together to make rules governing behaviour in the classroom.	A	74	20	6
	B	89	10	1
The administrative team works with teachers to resolve student discipline problems.	A	88	8	4
	B	96	3	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Parental and Community Involvement and Support

Most aspects of parental and community support were considered important by elementary staff, especially good relationships, frequent contact, and helping parents understand what went on in the classroom (see Table 18). In respondents' eyes, schools appeared to be better at maintaining good relations with parents than at helping them understand what was being taught. A fifth of the respondents were either uncertain whether this happened or did not believe that it did.

With regard to parental input, almost a quarter of the teachers were uncertain whether their school encouraged parental feedback regarding the quality of their programme, and a minority were also not sure whether this was particularly necessary. In contrast, almost all of the respondents reported that parents were encouraged to help out in their

schools and most felt that this was a good idea, although fewer believed that it was important for parents to help in classrooms. Again, the issue of power may have been at stake (see Chapter 10).

Support for community participation in school events was high and the majority of teachers believed that it was occurring in their schools.

Table 18
Parental and community involvement and support - percentage responses - total elementary sample

Statements		% A = Agree B = Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
People in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents.	A	96	4	0
	B	99	1	0
Contact with parents and the community is frequent, using a wide variety of formal and informal methods.	A	88	10	2
	B	96	4	0
The school does a good job of helping parents to understand more clearly what is being taught.	A	78	18	4
	B	95	4	1
The school encourages feedback from parents about the quality of the program.	A	71	24	5
	B	82	15	2
The staff encourage parents and community members to help out in the school.	A	93	6	1
	B	89	11	1
Many teachers use parent/community volunteers in the classroom.	A	78	15	7
	B	78	18	4
The community participates in school events.	A	87	10	3
	B	90	9	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Conclusion

Generally, the results of this survey were positive. Given that research undertaken elsewhere has demonstrated that effective schools are ones in which collaborative cultures are evident, when people work together to develop the learning for everyone in the school (see Mortimore et al., 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; research undertaken by participants in the International Congress of School Effectiveness and Improvement, 1988-92), Halton's elementary schools were certainly perceived to be effective by

the people who worked in them. Not only were agreement levels high, but in most cases, disagreement levels were low.

Furthermore, Halton elementary teachers believed that these indicators were important to the development of effective schools. This gave the system the mandate to look at the results where there was less agreement that the indicators existed and yet strong agreement that they were important and to start a dialogue between all the partners in the schools and school system.

There were several aspects of their schools about which teachers were uncertain. This may be reasonable, as even elementary schools are often large places where it is hard to know everything that is going on. Some teachers, however, pointed out that communication was not as good as it could be, and demonstrated balkanisation (Hargreaves, 1989) in their comments:

> *". . . I know what happens within my grade level team but I have no idea what methods of evaluation or motivational strategies exist in upper level grades. Quite often there is a distinct lack of communication between primary and junior grades."*

Administrator movement also appeared to have an impact on the way people responded to the survey. Several teachers noted that there had been one or more recent changes in principal. In some cases, this had not had a major impact on the school's mode of operation. In others, it had led to significant changes. The case profile in Appendix D1 illustrates this point (see also discussion in Chapter 10).

In this chapter, the impact of the Effective Schools Project on Halton's elementary teachers has been examined. The focus of Chapter 8 is the Project's impact on the secondary teachers.

CHAPTER 8

What was The Impact Of The Effective Schools Project On The Secondary Schools?

In this chapter, results are given of the effective schools questionnaire distributed in early March 1991 to 20 per cent of teachers in every secondary school. A case profile in Appendix D2, composed of one school's survey results, individual interviews with the principal and 20 staff members and some parent report survey results, illustrates the results and key themes that influence growth planning in secondary schools.

The Secondary Effective Schools Questionnaire Results

Presentation of results will follow a similar format to elementary results (see previous chapter).

Sample

Surveys were sent with covering letters to a randomly selected 20 per cent of teachers at every secondary school. Of 219 questionnaires distributed, 181 were returned, which represents a high response rate of 83 per cent.

Overall Results

The results of this survey showed some variation in the perceptions of Halton secondary teachers. While in 30 of the 82 items, three-quarters of the staff or more agreed that this characteristic was observable in their school, in 10 others fewer than half felt that the characteristic was reflected. In contrast to these results, however, were those related to the importance of the characteristics. In only 12 items was there less than 80 per cent agreement that the characteristic was important to the creation of an effective school. Thus, in their responses, secondary teachers validated these characteristics as key components of an effective school.

The items showing the highest agreement among respondents are given in Table 19.

Table 19
Characteristics reflecting highest percentage agreement, in priority order - secondary teachers

Statements	% Agreement (N=181)	% Importance (N=181)
Student progress is regularly and systematically monitored and assessed.	93	97
Formal and informal progress reports are given to parents regularly.	91	94
Teachers treat students fairly and with respect.	89	99
There is a well-organized co-curricular/extra-curricular program in the school.	89	91
New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	88	99
Student progress is monitored through a variety of methods of assessment and evaluation.	88	96
The leadership team promotes development activities for staff.	87	86
Teachers in this school work with support staff (school-based and external) to enhance student learning.	85	93
Teachers in this school are involved in ongoing professional development experiences.	85	91
A wide variety of resources are used to facilitate student learning.	84	97
The leadership team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.	83	91
There are many opportunities for reward and recognition throughout the school.	82	93
Programs to recognize students' achievement reflect school values.	82	90
People in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents.	82	90
Contact with parents and the community is frequent, using a wide variety of formal and informal methods.	82	87
The administrative team takes part in school-based development.	82	86
The primary purpose of this school is teaching and learning.	81	94

From the results in Table 19, it appears that most Halton secondary teachers viewed their schools as places that emphasised teaching and learning, monitoring of progress, recognition of students, extra-curricular activities, and relationships with support staff, students and parents. Ongoing adult learning was stressed, through the promotion of and participation in professional development activities. Halton schools were also seen as welcoming to their teachers.

In Table 20, items reflecting the lowest levels of agreement are shown. Although relationships with parents and community members were viewed to be important (as shown in Table 19), their involvement in secondary school life was seen as less crucial, and considerably fewer respondents reported active parental involvement or input in their schools. Similarly, students were not seen to be involved in all aspects of the educational process, nor was it deemed particularly important that they should be. This mirrors the results at elementary level. There are some exceptions. Although less than half of Halton secondary teachers felt that students in their schools were enthusiastic about learning, almost all believed that they should be. Furthermore, most teachers felt staff should work with students to solve problems and should praise all students for their accomplishments. Considerably fewer, however, were certain that this happened in their school.

There was considerably more uncertainty in secondary teachers' responses to several items, which indicated a possible lack of communication or discussion around some issues. Indeed, several teachers commented that they did not know what other teachers did in their classrooms and, therefore, could only respond from their own experience, as the following quotes illustrate:

> *"This survey asks me to comment on school-wide issues and suggests I can comment on learning strategies, student/teacher relationships, and curriculum across the school. Many of my impressions are very subjective. All I really know well in some areas are my courses, my class, my department."*

> *"Many questions were difficult to answer. I cannot speak for what other teachers do in their classroom!"*

Communication is discussed further in Chapter 9.

Table 20
Characteristics reflecting lowest percentage agreement, in reverse order - secondary teachers

Statements	% Agreement (N = 181)	% Importance (N=181)
The school has clear, consistent rules and expectations.	55	97
Staff and students work together to solve problems.	55	89
A lot of attention is given to keeping bulletin boards and other display areas attractive and up-to-date.	53	80
School goals are shared with the community.	53	76
The community participates in school events.	53	65
Staff regularly collaborate to plan curriculum and instruction.	50	87
Staff consider the school goals important.	49	86
Teachers praise all students for their accomplishments rather than only those who accomplish the most.	48	93
Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.	48	79
Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.	44	63
Students in this school have a say in school decisions that affect them.	44	62
The staff encourage parents and community members to help out in the school.	44	61
Students in this school are enthusiastic about learning.	43	94
Teachers and students work together to make rules governing behaviour in the classroom.	41	74
Disruptions of learning time are few.	37	83
Many teachers use parent/community volunteers in the classroom.	11	35

Results for Areas and Characteristics of Effectiveness

A Common Mission

Table 21 shows the percentage of secondary respondents who agreed with the indicators reflected in a common mission and those who considered them important.

Most staff believed that their school had a well-articulated mission or philosophy, although there was considerable uncertainty (30%) as to whether all staff were committed to it. Nonetheless, the majority felt it important to have a philosophy to which teachers were committed. Teachers also reported that growth and improvement were desirable, although only two-thirds of the respondents were sure that this was reflected in their school.

Table 21
A common mission - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
This school has a clearly articulated mission (philosophy).	A	75	14	11
	B	86	11	3
The staff is committed to the school's mission.	A	57	30	13
	B	89	6	5
The staff is committed to change, growth and improvement.	A	67	20	13
	B	95	5	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Shared Beliefs and Values

Teachers perceived all of the indicators related to shared beliefs and values to be important (see Table 22). While it was clear that teachers felt new staff were welcomed in school and approximately three-quarters believed that people in the school worked together as a team and participated in shared decision-making, there was considerably less consensus regarding the existence of high levels of trust and mutual respect. This was demonstrated to be important in the elementary case profile (see Appendix D1.)

Table 22
Shared values and beliefs - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
People in this school work together as a team.	A	75	12	13
	B	94	5	1
School events and activities reinforce school values.	A	76	16	8
	B	89	10	1
Staff participate in shared decision-making.	A	72	15	14
	B	91	8	1
High levels of trust and mutual respect exist in this school.	A	57	20	23
	B	98	2	0
New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	A	88	7	5
	B	99	1	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Several teachers commented that the department structure in secondary schools tended to inhibit collaboration between different subject areas. One, who noted the benefits of being in three different departments, added:

> *"I feel, in high schools, we are too department-oriented . . . too protective of our department, i.e. sections and staffing. We become suspicious of others."*

Another felt there was a need for administrators to:

> *". . . draw the entire school together . . . to support activities . . . i.e. set up a broad structure to support activities and ensure success and total involvement of staff, students and themselves."*

Clear Goals

Just over three-quarters of secondary staff felt their school had developed clear goals (see Table 23). Although the majority believed it was important for a school to have goals planned collaboratively and for staff to be committed to them, a sizeable minority were unclear as to whether activities throughout the school supported and reinforced their goals and, indeed, whether staff actually considered the goals to be important.

Table 23
Clear goals - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The school has developed a set of clearly stated goals.	A	78	12	10
	B	88	10	2
Planning is a collaborative process involving all staff.	A	61	24	15
	B	85	13	2
Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.	A	44	36	21
	B	63	28	9
Staff consider the school goals important.	A	49	34	17
	B	86	12	2
Activities throughout the school (classroom, co-curricular/ extra-curricular, special events) support and reinforce school goals.	A	66	30	4
	B	83	15	2
School goals are shared with the school community.	A	53	35	12
	B	76	21	3
School goals are regularly reviewed by the staff.	A	71	13	16
	B	81	14	6
Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.	A	48	39	12
	B	79	20	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

The majority of respondents reported that staff regularly reviewed their goals, but considerably fewer were clear whether their plan included means to evaluate successful goal accomplishment (39% were uncertain). As with elementary schools, it appeared that the involvement of students, parents and community members in the growth planning process did not occur at this time in many secondary schools, and a considerable number of teachers (37%) did not currently feel that it was particularly important to receive the input of the wider school community. Limited student and parent involvement were recurring themes (see sections in this chapter on Student Involvement and Responsibility, Positive Student Behaviour, and Parental and Community Involvement and Support, and discussion of the power balance in Chapter 10).

Given that staff involvement in school growth planning was relatively recent in many schools, and that change is a considerably slower process in secondary than elementary schools (Fullan, 1985; Louis and Miles, 1990), it was encouraging that so many secondary teachers believed they should be involved in the process. It appears, however, that not all secondary teachers were convinced in March 1991 of the value of school growth planning and in engaging the entire school community's involvement in it (see further discussion in the case profile in Appendix D2).

Instructional Leadership

Questions on instructional leadership referred both to the administrative team, that is the principal and vice principal(s) (see Table 24), and the entire leadership team: the principal, vice principal(s) and department heads (see Table 25).

Table 24
Instructional leadership - percentage responses to items concerning the administrative team - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The administrative team communicates a clear vision of where the school is going.	A	62	22	16
	B	91	8	1
The administrative team communicates high expectations to teachers, students, parents and community.	A	77	13	10
	B	94	6	0
The administrative team is 'visible' throughout the school to both staff and students.	A	65	14	21
	B	97	3	1
The administrative team communicates openly and frankly with staff, students and parents.	A	78	14	8
	B	98	2	0
The administrative team places priority on curriculum and instructional issues.	A	59	29	12
	B	84	15	2
The administrative team promotes collaborative problem-solving and conflict resolution.	A	65	26	9
	B	83	15	2
The administrative team takes part in school-based staff development.	A	82	16	2
	B	86	12	2

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

The different functions of the administrative team were seen by secondary staff as important components of an effective school, especially those related to communication, as Table 24 demonstrates.

Most respondents felt that the principal and vice principal(s) communicated high expectations and with openness to all members of the school community. They also saw the administrative team as being actively involved in school-based staff development. Fewer, however, were certain that a clear vision of the school's future was communicated by the administrators, or that they placed priority on curriculum and instruction. A minority (21%) also felt that their administrators were not visible around the school.

Respondents had mixed feelings with regard to the various functions of the leadership team (see Table 25).

Table 25
Instructional leadership - percentage responses to items concerning the leadership team - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The leadership team promotes development activities for staff.	A	87	10	3
	B	86	13	1
The leadership team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.	A	83	15	3
	B	91	8	1
The leadership team spends time in classrooms observing instruction.	A	61	23	16
	B	71	29	10
The leadership team is knowledgeable about instructional resources.	A	59	34	7
	B	73	23	4
The leadership team uses the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (CS & E) process to assist in the improvement of instruction.	A	72	26	2
	B	64	22	14

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

On one hand, they believed it important that the principal, vice principal(s), and heads be accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters, and to promote development activities. For the most part, respondents also reported that this occurred in their schools. On the other hand, there was less agreement that the leadership team were knowledgeable in terms of

instructional resources, observed classroom instruction, and used the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (CS and E) process, or that either observation or CS and E were particularly necessary to an effective school.

The indicators concerning classroom observation by administrators and their use of the CS and E process to improve instruction were also viewed by elementary teachers as somewhat less important to school effectiveness than most other characteristics addressed in this survey (see discussion in previous chapter).

Emphasis on Learning

There was almost unanimous agreement that the primary purposes of secondary school should be teaching and learning (see Table 26). In the majority of cases, respondents felt this occurred. Most teachers also believed that people worked with support staff to enhance learning and that this was a key component of an effective school.

Respondents were less clear whether their colleagues in secondary schools actually believed that all students can learn and be successful, although this was seen as an important feature of school effectiveness. Uncertainty regarding equity was a continuing theme in the results (see sections on High Expectations, and Recognition and Incentives), and indicated a need for further discussion on the issue.

Table 26
Emphasis on learning - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The primary purpose of this school is teaching and learning.	A	81	13	7
	B	94	5	2
Staff in this school really care about how much **all** students learn.	A	77	16	7
	B	96	3	1
Teachers in this school believe that **all** students can learn and be successful.	A	63	23	14
	B	88	11	1
Teachers in this school work with support staff (school-based).	A	85	11	5
	B	93	6	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

This was particularly important given the Ministry of Education's proposal (Government of Ontario, 1989) to destream grade 9, within its plans for the 'transition years' (grades 7 to 9). Tracking and streaming have been demonstrated to have negative effects on less able students (Oakes, 1985; Hargreaves and Earl, 1990).

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Monitoring of student progress in all its varied forms was seen by teachers as an extremely important characteristic of secondary schools (see Table 27).

Table 27
Frequent monitoring of students' progress - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Student progress is regularly and systematically monitored and assessed.	A	93	5	2
	B	97	2	1
Student progress is monitored through a variety of methods of assessment and evaluation.	A	88	9	3
	B	96	4	1
Teachers use assessment results to plan appropriate instruction and curriculum priorities.	A	58	32	10
	B	88	11	1
Teachers communicate to students how and why evaluation methods are used.	A	72	22	6
	B	91	8	1
Student assessment information is used to give specific feedback to students.	A	73	25	2
	B	89	9	2
Formal and informal progress reports are given to parents regularly.	A	91	4	5
	B	94	5	2

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

There was some diversity in teachers' opinions regarding monitoring and assessment practice. While teachers were confident that student progress was regularly and systematically monitored and assessed using a variety of methods, and that parents received regular progress reports, there was some uncertainty over the use of assessment results. In particular, a third of respondents were unclear whether results were used for subsequent

planning of instruction and curriculum, and a considerable number were also unsure of teachers' communication practices with students regarding assessment. As with elementary schools, it appeared that the details of assessment and evaluation procedures may not have been a frequent topic of discussion among teachers.

High Expectations

Secondary teachers clearly believed that expectations were important, although they were somewhat uncertain whether challenging and attainable achievement standards were set, communicated and maintained (see Table 28). Furthermore, less than two-thirds of the respondents believed that all students were treated in ways that emphasised success and potential. As percentages for 'uncertain' were somewhat higher than those for 'disagree', it again appeared that there may have been an issue around communication of expectations.

Table 28
High expectations - percentage responses - total secondary sample

		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Statements				
Challenging and attainable standards for achievement are set and maintained for **all** students.	A	62	24	14
	B	94	6	0
Achievement expectations are communicated to **all** students and parents.	A	70	23	7
	B	94	6	0
All students are treated in ways which emphasize success and potential rather than failures and shortcomings.	A	60	27	13
	B	94	4	2

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Teacher Collegiality and Development

In the area of teacher collegiality and development, results indicated that the focus on collaboration within Halton may have influenced secondary teachers' beliefs regarding the importance of sharing and collaboration. In terms of practice, however, less than two-thirds reported the regular sharing of skills and strategies and only a half agreed that staff regularly collaborated to plan curriculum and instruction. Again, levels of uncertainty were high (see Table 29). Secondary school size and

departmentalisation may have been influences on this (see further discussion in Chapter 9).

Table 29
Teacher collegiality and development - percentage responses - total secondary sample

		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Statements				
Teachers in this school are involved in ongoing professional development experiences.	A	85	12	3
	B	91	8	1
Teachers in this school consistently look for ways to improve their knowledge of curriculum and instructional techniques.	A	68	25	7
	B	95	5	0
Staff regularly collaborate to plan curriculum and instruction.	A	50	31	18
	B	87	12	2
Teachers regularly share teaching skills and strategies.	A	64	20	16
	B	91	8	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Teachers appeared to be actively involved in professional development experiences. However, although almost all respondents considered that teachers in their school should be engaged in an ongoing search to improve both knowledge and techniques, a third (32%) were either uncertain as to whether this happened or did not believe it did.

Focus on Instruction and Curriculum

From the results, it was clear that secondary teachers were firmly committed to the importance of a curricular and instructional focus (see Table 30). The majority reported that a wide variety of resources were used in secondary schools, and most believed that a variety of strategies and motivational techniques were employed, although there was some uncertainty in these two areas. Learning activities were generally seen to be related to objectives and outcomes. There was less certainty whether reinforcement of key skills across grade levels and courses occurred, even though it was considered important. The high percentage of people who were uncertain may reflect the communication difficulties of large departmentalised secondary schools, although this parallels the finding of

the elementary survey. Curricula in Ontario secondary schools are also not developed internally and, therefore, the onus is on the school to ensure a coherent, school-wide policy on delivery of programme. Some schools would be more successful than others in achieving this, but it remains a challenge for all schools.

Table 30
Focus on instruction and curriculum - percentages responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Learning activities are related to learning objectives and outcomes.	A	78	17	6
	B	93	6	1
A wide variety of resources are used to facilitate student learning.	A	84	12	5
	B	97	3	0
Curriculum planning ensures that key skills are reinforced across grade levels and courses.	A	56	34	10
	B	90	9	2
Teachers use a wide variety of teaching skills and strategies.	A	75	20	6
	B	96	5	0
Teachers use a variety of motivational techniques to promote student learning and growth.	A	72	25	3
	B	93	7	0
Disruptions of learning time are few.	A	37	20	44
	B	83	12	5

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Several people commented on changing needs to match a changing society. Some respondents suggested alternative forms of programming, more input from employers regarding their needs and, as the following quote demonstrates, a broader approach to instruction:

> *"If we are concerned with maximising the learning of all students, we must move away from the current subject-oriented, class-based, textbook oriented form of instruction. The emphasis of instruction must be on the development of skills. This would require a specification of skills across the curriculum."*

A Climate Conducive to Learning

More than for any of the other characteristics, respondents were very clear on the importance of each of the climate indicators to an effective school. There was, however, more variation in opinion concerning the current status of Halton secondary schools (see Table 31).

Table 31
A climate conducive to learning - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The atmosphere in this school encourages learning.	A	71	20	10
	B	97	3	0
A positive feeling permeates this school.	A	62	25	13
	B	96	4	0
Students in this school are enthusiastic about learning.	A	43	34	23
	B	94	5	1
Teachers like working in this school.	A	76	16	8
	B	95	5	0

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

On one hand, more than three-quarters of respondents felt that teachers enjoyed working in their school. Several comments from different schools confirmed this:

> *"I believe this particular school is in the forefront in the most positive way with regard to all the issues represented in this paper."*
>
> *"Of all the schools I've been in, this one is, by far, the most caring, compassionate and supporting of both staff and students . . ."*
>
> *". . . staff and administration have really endeavoured to reach for the future! This staff works hard!"*
>
> *"The testimonials of our successful students demonstrate the quality of our curricula, our teachers, our school . . ."*

Many teachers (71%) also believed that their school's atmosphere promoted learning. Fewer, however, were certain that there was a positive feeling throughout the school.

The lowest level of agreement and considerable uncertainty occurred in response to an item examining student enthusiasm. Fewer than half of the teachers were convinced that students in their school displayed enthusiasm about learning. From these results it appears that some teachers may still lay responsibility for poor performance and attitudes at the students' door, whereas school effectiveness research suggests that schools can make a positive difference to behaviour, attitudes and achievement. Indeed, rather than the student being seen as 'at risk', it is necessary for educators to examine their school carefully to determine whether it is 'at risk'.

Student Involvement and Responsibility

Results in the area of student involvement and responsibility were diverse. Clearly, secondary teachers believed it important that students think independently and feel good about themselves. However, they were not all sure that this was the situation (see Table 32).

Table 32
Student involvement and responsibility - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
Students in this school are encouraged to think for themselves.	A	67	24	9
	B	97	3	1
Students in this school have a say in school decisions that affect them.	A	44	32	24
	B	62	33	5
Students are given opportunities to take on extra jobs and responsibilities in the school.	A	77	14	9
	B	81	15	3
Students in this school see themselves as able, responsible and valuable.	A	61	29	10
	B	92	8	0
There is a well-organised co-curricular/ extra-curricular activities program in the school.	A	89	6	5
	B	91	8	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

One indicator produced a fair amount of disagreement and uncertainty. Under half of the respondents reported that students in their school had a say in school decisions that might affect them. This reiterates the response pattern regarding student input into the growth planning process, and is later reflected in the section on positive student behaviour. Looking at the percentages for importance, however, it appears that teachers were not convinced of the necessity for student involvement in school decision-making. This parallels the findings of the elementary survey, and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Physical Environment

An attractive school building, hallways and classrooms were considered important by the majority of the respondents. A quarter, however, did not feel that the school building was well maintained or attractive. It also appears from the results that a sizeable minority of teachers were unsure whether students' work was displayed and how much attention was given to updating display areas (see Table 33). Display of students' work was demonstrated in secondary school effectiveness research to have a positive impact on student outcomes, particularly behaviour (Rutter et al., 1979). It may be an indicator of student involvement and enhance feelings of self-worth.

Table 33
Physical environment - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The physical condition of the school is attractive, clean and well-kept.	A	68	7	25
	B	96	4	1
Students' work is prominently displayed.	A	63	21	17
	B	87	12	1
A lot of attention is given to keeping bulletin boards and other display areas attractive and up-to-date.	A	53	25	21
	B	80	19	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Recognition and Incentives

Recognition and incentives were seen as important indicators of an effective school by the majority of the respondents (see Table 34). Most teachers believed their school offered many opportunities for reward and recognition, and three-quarters felt that an effort was made to promote positive student self-concept. There was considerably less certainty, however, as to whether all students were equally praised for their accomplishments. This confirmed similar findings in the section on high expectations.

Responses were also mixed in terms of perceptions of recognition of teacher successes. A sizeable number of respondents (41%) were either uncertain whether this occurred or felt that teacher successes were not recognised in their school. A desire was noted by a few for greater recognition of teachers who remained in the classroom, as the quote below demonstrates. These respondents felt that too much emphasis was placed on leadership, promotion and, in some cases, even co-curricular activities:

> *"It seems that the staff who are recognised over and over again are those that have a high profile outside of the classroom."*

Table 34
Recognition and incentives - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
There are many opportunities for reward and recognition throughout the school.	A	82	14	5
	B	93	7	1
Programs to recognize students' achievement reflect school values.	A	82	16	2
	B	90	9	1
Teachers praise **all** students for their accomplishments rather than only those who accomplish the most.	A	48	38	14
	B	93	6	1
Teachers work to enhance students' self-concept.	A	75	20	6
	B	97	2	1
Successes of teachers are recognized.	A	59	21	20
	B	88	10	2

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

Positive Student Behaviour

Other than student involvement in making decisions regarding rules governing their classroom behaviour, all other indicators of student behaviour were viewed as important components of an effective school, (see Table 35).

Table 35
Positive student behaviour - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
The school has a clearly stated behaviour code.	A	70	19	11
	B	98	1	1
The school has clear, consistent rules and expectations.	A	55	22	23
	B	97	3	0
Staff and students work together to solve problems.	A	55	27	18
	B	89	8	0
Teachers treat students fairly and with respect.	A	89	10	1
	B	99	1	0
Teachers consistently treat students with understanding, caring and concern.	A	79	18	3
	B	98	2	0
Teachers and students work together to make rules governing behaviour in the classroom.	A	41	44	15
	B	74	15	11
The administrative team works with teachers to resolve student discipline problems.	A	72	21	7
	B	96	4	1

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

A lack of joint teacher and student involvement was reported in problem-solving related to behaviour. Sarason (1990) stresses the importance of student involvement in such issues (see Chapter 10 for further discussion). In contrast, however, the administrative team was seen by the majority to be actively supportive in resolving student discipline problems.

Teachers believed that adults in the school treated students fairly and with respect, and most also felt students were shown understanding and concern.

Although almost three-quarters of the respondents thought that their school had a clearly stated behaviour code, there was considerably less agreement that it was reflected in clear and consistent rules and expectations. The concern of secondary teachers over behaviour was discussed in Chapter 5, along with the need for principals to focus on this issue as part of their climate-setting (see, also, the elementary case profile in Appendix D1). Some teachers noted the influence of societal changes on student behaviour and consequent demands placed on schools.

Parental and Community Involvement and Support

Relationships and frequent contact with parents and the community were seen as important and, for the most part, teachers believed their schools were successful in these areas (see Table 36).

Table 36
Parental and community involvement and support - percentage responses - total secondary sample

Statements		% A=Agree B=Important	% Uncertain Less Important	% Disagree Not Important
People in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents.	A	82	13	5
	B	90	7	2
Contact with parents and the community is frequent, using a wide variety of formal and informal methods.	A	82	12	7
	B	87	11	2
The school does a good job of helping parents to understand more clearly what is being taught.	A	57	31	10
	B	82	15	3
The school encourages feedback from parents about the quality of the program.	A	56	33	11
	B	78	19	3
The staff encourage parents and community members to help out in the school.	A	44	37	19
	B	61	30	9
Many teachers use parent/community volunteers in the classroom.	A	11	40	49
	B	35	42	23
The community participates in school events.	A	53	29	19
	B	65	31	5

*** Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.**

From responses, however, it seemed that schools were better at maintaining good relations with parents than helping them understand what was being taught or receiving feedback from them on the quality of program. Over 40 per cent of respondents were either uncertain whether these occurred or did not believe that they did. Active parental and community participation within the school and during school events was not considered very important, particularly involvement within classrooms. Little of this, however was reported.

Conclusion

The results of this survey demonstrated some diversity in secondary teachers' opinions regarding different aspects of school effectiveness as evidenced in their schools. On one hand, they perceived their schools as places that: welcomed new teachers; focused on relationships with parents and support staff; recognised students and treated them with fairness; emphasised teaching and learning, the monitoring of progress and extra-curricular activities; and encouraged ongoing professional development. On the other, some characteristics of more effective schools were noted less frequently: collaboration between and among teachers, students, parents, and administration; commitment to the school's vision and goals; equity of expectations for and treatment of students; consistency of curriculum planning to reinforce key skills; student involvement, responsibility and enthusiasm; feedback to and input from parents regarding program and school goals; and clarity of school discipline procedures.

Halton's secondary schools may have made a start in the direction of collaborative cultures and shared ownership for learning, but have some way to go. This is not altogether surprising, given that change is a much slower process in secondary than elementary schools (Fullan, 1985; Louis and Miles, 1990). The size of secondary schools, number of staff, older student population and frequently balkanised department structures inhibit rapid change (Hargreaves, 1989; Hargreaves and Earl, 1990; Watson et al., 1991). (See also Chapter 9.)

For the most part, however, Halton's secondary staff believed that the indicators described in this survey were important to the development of effective schools. As in the case of the elementary results, this would allow schools to examine the gap between perceptions of importance and current practice, and set appropriate goals. Just as it is important to involve teachers in decision-making, it is equally important that they be involved in discussions of such findings: whether they should be aware of what goes on in other people's classrooms; why they perceive some of the indicators as

less important; what the indicators really mean to them; which ones are most important; and how to turn these into a reality if they are not already part of the school's culture. Thus, this questionnaire is not a blueprint for excellence. It may provide results of a system's endeavour, but its real purpose is to promote discussion and reflection concerning the research on more effective schools as it relates to what actually happens in schools.

As in the elementary survey, but even more marked, was the finding that there were several aspects of their schools about which teachers were unsure. Secondary schools in particular, are large and complex which makes communication difficult. A few respondents noted that they would have found it easier to answer questions that focused on 'my classroom'. It seems that the breaking down of classroom and department barriers is a particular challenge for secondary teachers. One school's attempt to do this through school growth planning is illustrated in Appendix D2.

In Chapters 7 and 8, the Effective Schools Project's impact on elementary and secondary teachers, respectively, has been examined. In Chapter 9, similarities and variations in elementary and secondary teachers' perceptions according to the effective schools questionnaire are analysed.

CHAPTER 9

What was the Difference in Impact of the Effective Schools Project Between Elementary and Secondary Schools?

In the previous two chapters, results were given of an effective schools questionnaire administered throughout Halton schools to elementary and secondary teachers. Case profiles illustrated these results and the school growth planning process in one elementary and one secondary school.

In this chapter, the questionnaire results are further examined to see whether there were significant differences between elementary and secondary teachers in their perceptions of the occurrence and importance of these school effectiveness indicators.

Method

T tests were carried out to ascertain differences in elementary and secondary teachers' responses to items within the three major scales - common mission, emphasis on learning, and climate conducive to learning - and the subscales within these scales (see Appendix I for scales and subscales).

Results

Results will first be given for the differences in agreement with and importance of the items within the major scales, then for those within the 15 subscales. In all cases, the mean represents the average response on a five-point scale, one denoting strong disagreement and five strong agreement (see Chapter 2).

Results for Three Scales

Responses of Halton elementary and secondary teachers were significantly different on all three scales. Elementary teachers were more positive that these concepts were present in their schools and also perceived them to be of greater importance in the creation of an effective school (see Tables 37 and 38).

Table 37
Differences between elementary and secondary teachers in agreement with three major scales of Halton's characteristics of effectiveness model

Scales	Elementary Mean	Secondary Mean	p
A common mission	4.09	3.76	.000 ***
Emphasis on learning	4.10	3.81	.000 ***
Climate conducive to learning	4.15	3.67	.000 ***

***** Significant at the < .001 level.**

Table 38
Differences between elementary and secondary teachers in perceptions of importance of three major scales of the characteristics of effectiveness model

Scales	Elementary Mean	Secondary Mean	p
A common mission	4.41	4.21	000 ***
Emphasis on learning	4.47	4/34	000 ***
Climate conducive to learning	4.46	4.24	000 ***

***** Significant at the < .001 level.**

The greatest difference between elementary and secondary teachers' perceptions of the current status of their schools was the extent to which they believed the climate to be conducive to learning (see Table 37). The subscale results identify the specific areas of least agreement (see next section).

In terms of importance (see Table 38), there was less difference between the means of the two groups, but this was still significant at the < .001 level. Interestingly, the elementary means for the three scales were almost identical, whereas there was a slightly greater range in the secondary teachers' responses, the most importance being attributed to the concept of an emphasis on learning. As noted in Chapters 7 and 8, however, and confirmed by the means in Table 38, overall, both elementary and secondary teachers viewed most of these concepts as important.

Results for Subscales

The analysis of the subscales within the three broad scales allowed for closer examination of the key areas of difference in perception between

elementary and secondary teachers after more than four years of the Effective Schools Project. All but one of the subscales, frequent monitoring of student progress, demonstrated highly significant differences between the two groups in their beliefs in the existence of these concepts in their schools (see Table 39).

Table 39
Differences between elementary and secondary teachers in agreement with subscales of Halton's characteristics of effectiveness model

Subscales	Elementary Mean	Rank Order	Secondary Mean	Rank Order	p
Emphasis on learning	4.34	1	3.96	2	.000 ***
Climate conducive to learning	4.21	2	3.65	12	.001 ***
Parental and community involvement and support	4.21	2	3.50	15	.000 ***
Positive student behaviour	4.19	4	3.71	7	.000 ***
Instructional leadership	4.18	5	3.83	3	.001 ***
Physical environment	4.12	6	3.52	14	.001 ***
Recognition and incentives	4.11	7	3.80	4	.001 ***
Shared values and beliefs	4.11	7	3.79	5	.001 ***
Teacher collegiality and development	4.09	9	3.69	8	.001 ***
A common mission	4.08	10	3.68	9	.001 ***
Student involvement and responsibility	4.07	11	3.75	6	.001 ***
High expectations	4.01	12	3.67	10	.001 ***
Focus on curriculum and instruction	4.01	12	3.67	10	.001 ***
Frequent monitoring of student progress	4.00	14	4.02	1	.704
Clear goals	3.92	15	3.58	13	.001 ***

***** Significant at < .001 level**

Monitoring of student progress was also the only subscale not to show differences in teachers' perceptions of importance, although two others, a common mission and teacher collegiality and development, were only significant at the < .05 level (see Table 40).

From the results in Tables 39 and 40, it was clear that elementary teachers felt very differently from their secondary counterparts about what was happening in their schools and its importance. Overall, elementary teachers were considerably more positive, especially in their perception of their current situation. This was perhaps not surprising given the complexity and compartmentalisation of secondary schools. Indeed, looking back at the tables in Chapter 8, secondary teachers did not necessarily disagree that many of the characteristics reflected in the questionnaire existed in their schools, nor did they dispute their

questionnaire existed in their schools, nor did they dispute their importance. Rather, the sheer size of their schools and departmental structure made whole-school communication more difficult, even though the case profile school made a serious attempt to address this (see Appendix D2).

Table 40
Differences between elementary and secondary teachers in perceptions of importance of subscales of Halton's characteristics of effectiveness model

Subscales	Elementary Mean	Rank Order	Secondary Mean	Rank Order	p
Climate conducive to learning	4.70	1	4.46	1	.000 ***
Emphasis on learning	4.68	2	4.45	2	.000 ***
Positive student behaviour	4.63	3	4.43	4	.000 ***
Shared values and beliefs	4.58	4	4.44	3	.000 ***
High expectations	4.54	5	4.37	5	.000 ***
Recognition and incentives	4.49	6	4.29	9	.000 ***
A common mission	4.47	7	3.36	6	.050 *
Focus on curriculum and instruction	4.45	8	4.30	8	.000 ***
Teacher collegiality and development	4.39	9	4.27	10	.011 *
Instructional leadership	4.39	9	4.17	12	.000 ***
Physical environment	4.37	11	4.18	11	.000 ***
Frequent monitoring of student progress	4.36	12	4.34	7	.577
Student involvement and responsibility	4.30	13	4.15	13	.000 ***
Parental and community involvement and support	4.29	14	3.87	15	.000 ***
Clear goals	4.24	15	4.05	14	.000 ***

*** Significant at < .05 level**
***** Significant at < .001 level**

Ultimately, teachers have much invested in their departments, as Johnson (1990) observes:

> "*. . . high school teachers usually regard themselves as members of departments, their interests and identities resting primarily with colleagues who share similar academic interests and training* " (p. 167).

Furthermore, as the department structure has existed for many years in a diverse array of settings, it is unlikely that it can easily be changed (Johnson, 1990).

Another possible influence on the general pattern of these results may be a fundamental difference between elementary and secondary teachers' attitudes. As a group, the latter tend to be more skeptical, and less willing to accept information at face value. This may be because they deal daily with older students who are more likely to challenge their thinking. Alternatively, the bias of certain subjects, in particular science, social science and mathematics, leans towards the asking of questions to understand meaning or the proof of hypotheses. A third possible difference is that those people who enter secondary teaching may be oriented less towards the nurturing of young children and creation of community feeling as joint goals with academic growth, and more towards academic achievement, post-school orientation and the harsh reality of the 'real world' that their students will soon enter. All of these differences may influence secondary teachers to answer questions more critically and be less prepared to commit themselves to an answer if they are not sure.

The subscales within the three scales will now be discussed in more detail.

Subscales of A Common Mission

Rutter et al. (1979) argue that an essential difference between an effective and ineffective school is its 'ethos' or culture. In the effective school, there is a common view of what the school stands for and how people will act to achieve their shared goals. Inevitably, within secondary schools that face diverse demands from society, the community and higher education (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990), as well as their very complexity, it is a considerably greater challenge to develop and sustain shared values and beliefs, much less a common mission. This was demonstrated in Halton's results, although, interestingly, the difference between elementary and secondary teachers in perception of importance only just reached significance. Clearly, from the high means, the majority of teachers believed inherently in the importance of a common mission. Even more important were seen to be shared values and beliefs, whereas clearly defined goals appeared slightly less significant to both groups, ranking last for the elementary teachers and second last for secondary teachers.

School-wide planning is not easy to achieve in secondary schools because it is viewed as 'foreign' (Berman and Gjelten, 1984). Little (1990b) also maintains that teachers in secondary schools suffer from goal ambiguity and goal overload. Given that secondary schools, both in Halton and

elsewhere (Leithwood, 1987; Fullan 1990b) tend to address a wider range of goals than elementary schools, the Halton secondary teachers' feeling of less goal clarity than their elementary colleagues appears understandable. Indeed, most teachers interviewed in the secondary case profile (see Appendix D2) were able to discuss, in great detail, departmental goals within their growth plan. Perhaps this is because departments engender teachers' interest by providing the goal coherence and task direction that the school as a whole cannot offer (Little, 1990b).

Although the two groups of teachers differed in their perceptions of their administrators, relative to the other subscales, instructional leadership ranked within the top five (see Table 39). In particular, in the secondary schools, only frequent monitoring of progress and an emphasis on learning were seen as more prevalent. In contrast, in terms of importance, rankings were lower for both groups, especially the secondary teachers (see Table 40). Leadership at elementary and secondary levels may be somewhat different, as the case profiles in Appendix D suggest. Whereas the elementary principal is often directly involved in curriculum and instruction, this is less frequently the case in secondary schools (Johnson, 1990).

Subscales of Emphasis on Learning

Although the T test results suggest no variation between the two groups in their attitudes to monitoring of progress, comparatively there was a difference, illustrated in the ranking of the means, relative to those for other subscales. Secondary teachers displayed more confidence that monitoring of progress occurred in their schools than any other aspect of school effectiveness incorporated within the subscales (see Table 39). In contrast, of 15 subscales, the mean score for monitoring progress was second lowest for the elementary teachers.

Furthermore, examination of means of individual items within this subscale showed that while more elementary teachers believed they used assessment results to plan appropriate curricula, more secondary teachers felt they communicated to students evaluations' purposes and methods, and gave specific assessment feedback to students.

Elementary teachers also viewed monitoring of progress as relatively less important than most other aspects of school effectiveness, whereas for secondary teachers it ranked in the middle (see Table 40). Lack of confidence in student assessment was also demonstrated in the

elementary case profile (see Appendix D1). Certainly, student assessment was shown to be a complex area at both elementary and secondary levels, and one that needed attention (for further discussion, see Chapter 10).

Despite the more extreme responses of elementary teachers, both groups were fairly consistent in the relative importance they attached to the other concepts within an emphasis on learning (see Table 40). An emphasis on learning, itself, was viewed as most important, while a focus on curriculum and instruction and teacher collegiality and development were perceived as relatively less important. Fullan (1991a) maintains that the power for change lies in teacher collaboration but, as Little (1990b) points out:

> *"The persistent autonomy of the self-contained classroom and the importance of the diverse 'menu' of electives in most secondary schools serve to sustain teachers' independence from peers . . . "* (p. 195).

The challenge of this isolation for joint programme planning is, therefore, considerable (Hargreaves, 1989). Where joint work takes place, it is largely at department level (Johnson, 1990). This was confirmed in additional questionnaire comments from Halton secondary teachers who noted they could answer for themselves, but not colleagues in other departments.

While there was a significant difference between elementary and secondary teachers, both believed high expectations to be important (see Table 40). In terms of the placement of this concept relative to other subscales, however, agreement levels for both groups were lower than for most other subscales (see Table 39). Of particular concern were the responses of secondary teachers concerning the setting and maintenance of challenging and attainable achievement standards for **all** students (62% secondary agreed, compared with 78% elementary), and the treatment of **all** students to emphasise success rather than failure (60% secondary agreed, compared with 78% elementary). The levels of uncertainty for both elementary and secondary teachers with respect to these items suggested a lack of school-wide understanding of expectations.

Subscales of Climate Conducive to Learning

As noted earlier, differences between elementary and secondary teachers were particularly striking in the climate conducive to learning subscales, notably in the areas of parental and community involvement and support,

physical environment, climate, and positive student behaviour. The elementary means for climate and parental involvement were almost the highest out of the 15 subscales, and positive student behaviour and physical environment fell within the top six (see Table 39). In contrast, at secondary level, with exception of positive student behaviour which had the seventh highest mean, the means for the other three areas occurred within the four most poorly rated areas.

Secondary teachers' perceptions of a climate less conducive to learning than that of their elementary colleagues highlight the increasing alienation and isolation of adolescents described elsewhere (Hargreaves, 1982; Hargreaves and Earl, 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990). Whereas 80 per cent of elementary teachers thought students in their schools were enthusiastic about learning, the same was true of only 43 per cent of their secondary counterparts. Teachers' perceptions of students have been shown to impact negatively on planning efforts when teachers dwell on a 'golden age' when "*students really wanted to learn*" (Louis and Miles, 1990, p. 187).

Student enthusiasm may relate to the amount of involvement and responsibility teachers allow them. Although the secondary case profile (see Appendix D2) demonstrated considerable student involvement in comparison to that in the elementary case profile (see Appendix D1), overall, more elementary than secondary teachers believed that students were encouraged to think for themselves, provide input into school decisions, take on extra responsibilities, and solve behaviour problems jointly with teachers. Perhaps more significantly, a slightly greater number of elementary (68%) than secondary (62%) teachers felt that students should have a say in school decisions that impacted them. Elementary teachers were also more likely to believe that their students viewed themselves as able, responsible and valuable (83% elementary; 61% secondary). Ontario's policy of streaming at secondary level may have been in part responsible for this, but the neglect of adolescents' personal and social needs may also have had an impact (Hargreaves and Earl, 1990), in addition to the fragmentation of secondary students' experience that leads to isolation (Hargreaves, 1982). Interestingly, relative to other subscales, both elementary and secondary teachers perceived student involvement and responsibility to be less important (see Table 40).

Discipline, a related issue and perennial for many secondary teachers (see Climate Setting, Chapter 5), is often linked to the 'golden age'

mythology described above. Both Halton groups felt that positive student behaviour was one of the most important effectiveness concepts (see Table 40). Far fewer secondary teachers than their elementary colleagues, however, believed that their school had clear and consistent rules and expectations (55% secondary; 79% elementary), and yet fewer than half (41%) reported that teachers and students worked together in classrooms to develop behaviour rules (compared with 74% elementary). Furthermore, almost half (44%) were not certain whether this happened or not. This suggests that some teachers, at least, placed the onus for behaviour management outside of the classroom and their control, and that in many cases students were excluded altogether from the decision-making process. Relationships with students are further discussed in Chapter 10.

Attention to students' social development was addressed in the recognition and incentives subscale. Here, the pattern continued, with considerably fewer secondary (75%) than elementary (91%) teachers reporting that teachers worked to enhance students' self-concepts. Given that almost all (97%) of the secondary teachers perceived this as important, it is perhaps surprising that as many as one fifth were uncertain whether this actually occurred. Of greater concern was the large difference between elementary and secondary schools in teachers' perceptions of praise. Whereas 79 per cent of elementary teachers reported that **all** students were praised for their accomplishments, rather than only those who accomplished the most, only 48 per cent of secondary teachers believed this to be true, and 14 per cent actively disagreed. This raises issues of equity and expectations as well as the continuing theme of student engagement and involvement (see Chapter 10). Secondary teachers also rated recognition and incentives as relatively less important than did elementary teachers (see Table 40).

Secondary teachers' perceptions of the physical environment demonstrated less emphasis than elementary teachers on displays in hallways and public areas, aspects of the environment over which teachers have control. Given that the public display of secondary pupils' work was found to be particularly beneficial to their behaviour and had a positive impact on delinquency (Rutter et al., 1979), this would suggest that more attention to this area might have been merited.

Some studies of effective secondary schools have demonstrated less need for close parental involvement in instruction than in elementary schools (see review by Leithwood, 1987), although broad-based relationships with their communities are characteristic of effective high schools (Wilson and

Corcoran, 1988). Fullan (1991a) points out that the type of community involvement in secondary schools is different and more complicated than that in elementary schools and incorporates 'reaching the community' (Wilson and Corcoran, 1988).

In Halton, there was a considerable difference between elementary and secondary schools in the amount of parental involvement. Elementary teachers reported extensive help throughout the school (93%), while this was not the norm in secondary schools (44%). Whereas volunteer help was almost absent in secondary classrooms (11% reported such assistance), it was a common feature within elementary schools (78%). Both groups reported frequent contact with parents through a variety of methods, although significantly more elementary teachers believed that their schools were successful in helping parents to understand classroom practice (78%, versus 59% secondary) and in encouraging feedback from parents about the programme's quality (71%, versus 56% secondary). Community participation in school events was also perceived to be higher by elementary (87%) than secondary teachers (53%).

Interestingly, various aspects of parental and community involvement were viewed by both groups as being relatively less important than other facets of school effectiveness. For both elementary and secondary teachers, classroom help was viewed as least significant, although still more than three-quarters (78%) of elementary teachers thought it was important (compared with 35% of secondary). Responses were much closer concerning the importance of parental feedback. Seventy-eight per cent of the secondary teachers felt this was a key component of an effective school, compared with 82 per cent of the elementary teachers. It is interesting to note that the types of involvement that most closely impinge on the instructional process were viewed as less important, although several secondary teachers also felt that general help and community participation were not essential. The lesser desire for close community involvement in the classroom may relate to the traditional 'classroom as a castle' ideal and a fear to open themselves up to public scrutiny, especially from unqualified people. Several teachers in both groups also felt it was not very important for their principal or department head to observe them in the classroom.

The fundamental flavour that emerges from the climate conducive to learning subscale is that although secondary teachers stressed the importance of a positive climate, in their behaviours they were not all prepared to take responsibility for the development and maintenance of

such a climate. Furthermore, they were less interested in involving students, parents and the community in this effort. Fullan (1991a) maintains that for meaningful change to occur, all groups need to be involved:

> *"The underlying consequence . . . is the development of knowledge on the part of parents, teachers and students and of skills in relation to specific practices. It is, in other words, the development of the meaning of change at the level of individuals with some opportunity to achieve shared meanings"*(p. 249).

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been shown that, by 1991, significantly more Halton elementary than secondary teachers believed both that their schools possessed most of the characteristics of effectiveness, and that these indicators were important to promote school effectiveness. The one exception, where no difference between the two groups was demonstrated, was the area of monitoring student progress. Secondary teachers exhibited relatively more confidence in this concept and elementary teachers relatively less.

In terms of agreement with the items, means for the subscales suggest that parental involvement, a climate conducive to learning, and a positive physical environment were perceived to be considerably more prevalent in elementary than secondary schools.

Elementary and secondary teachers were much closer on the relative importance they afforded each of the concepts. Whereas a climate conducive to learning, an emphasis on learning, positive student behaviour, and shared values and beliefs were perceived as more important, student involvement and responsibility, parental and community involvement and support, and clear goals were viewed as less important. The only area where they differed was monitoring of student progress which was seen as relatively more important to secondary teachers.

Some of the issues raised by these results, other issues generated throughout the research, and the implications of both will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

Discussion of Recurring Themes

The focus of this research was an examination of a Canadian school district's attempt to blend the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms within a system-wide Effective Schools Project over five years, and this Project's impact on the system and its schools. Special attention was paid to any differential results between elementary and secondary schools. In this chapter, key themes that arose throughout the research will be discussed.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first, themes most closely connected to the school will be examined, while in the second the focus will turn to district-level issues. Obviously schools do not exist in isolation of the district, and therefore district initiatives will affect the school and vice versa, but the researcher has made decisions within this discussion on their placement according to their particular relevance within this study. In the third section, themes which reflect the integration of schools and the system will be discussed.

School-Level Themes

Five school-level themes emerged. These are: the nature of school growth planning; fundamental conditions of school growth planning and the importance of culture; the role of leadership; the teacher as learner; and the complexity of change in secondary schools.

The Nature of School Growth Planning

School-based planning and development was not unique to Halton. Throughout the world, many schools, systems and researchers have adopted similar approaches, although each has its own special features (see, for example, Loucks-Horsley and Hergert, 1985; Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Bollen and Hopkins, 1987; Holly and Southworth, 1989; Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990; Education Department of South Australia, 1990; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). Halton's model, however, had 11 specific qualities (Stoll, in press):

1. A focus on shared decision-making
2. Coordination by a small group
3. Emphasis on fundamental conditions
4. Commitment to a few key goals
5. Engagement in an ongoing dynamic process
6. Emphasis on assessment, monitoring and evaluation
7. Use of school effectiveness characteristics in the assessment phase
8. Commitment to instruction
9. Recognition of each school's unique context and culture
10. Incorporation of familiar features of Halton's culture
11. Acknowledgement of the school as the centre of change.

1. A Focus on Shared Decision-Making

Commitment to change in Halton was more likely when all the people involved in the implementation of a school improvement effort were also part of the decision-making process that selected particular goals, although many schools had growth planning teams who were charged with the major responsibility for coordinating the growth plan. As demonstrated in the elementary case profile (see Appendix D1), decentralisation of decision-making in Project schools was not always straightforward, especially when administrators traditionally were used to making all the decisions and many teachers still expected this of them. In addition, the principal still carried the ultimate responsibility for school-level decisions and, therefore, had to know that they could defend them. The emphasis on shared decision-making was consistent with research on successful change efforts (Fullan, 1982, 1991a; Levine and Lezotte, 1990).

2. Coordination by a Small Group

While whole-group decision-making is important for commitment, the Halton experience was that it was neither manageable nor a good use of the teacher's time for every staff member to be involved in the development and coordination of the finer details of growth planning. By 1991 many, although not all, schools had a school growth planning team. Membership selection and roles varied. In some schools teachers volunteered, in others they were co-opted or requested or informed by the principal. Some schools were only represented by non-classroom roles, for example administrators and special education resource teachers, or those in responsibility positions, for example department heads. In contrast, other schools had a much broader representation. This

promoted greater commitment, as did principals who took a lower profile role on the team rather than those who directed all activities.

Sometimes, team members expressed concern in the early stages of the Team Training that they might be perceived as an elite. Ongoing communication between these people and other teachers was essential for the development of trust and commitment. Planning teams have also been recommended by other researchers (Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990; Holcomb, 1991), who also promote broader representation, including parents and students. While this was a feature of some Halton teams, many others did not yet include them (see Micro-Politics: The Balance of Power).

3. Emphasis on Fundamental Conditions

Shared vision, climate-setting, collegiality and continuous improvement, and a sense of mission were viewed as essential components of the process (for fuller discussion see Fundamental Conditions of School Growth Planning and the Importance of Culture). In addition, an understanding of and ability to enhance school culture underpinnned successful school improvement efforts. This concurred with research undertaken elsewhere (Fullan, 1985; Holly and Southworth, 1989; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991).

4. Commitment to a Few Key Goals

This was one of the most challenging features of the school growth plan. Schools face so many competing demands from districts, ministries or governments and society, as well as their own areas of interest, that it is hard for them to decide on a few key priorities. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) distinguish between maintenance and development. Where the growth plan differed from the British school development plan, however, is that it did not attempt to perform both functions. Maintenance had to occur, and various processes were in place to ensure that it did. Teachers also continued to pursue areas of their own interest. The major functions of the growth plan, however, was to select a small number of areas and engage in school-wide development of them. A growth plan cannot be expected to contain anything and everything the school is involved in or else it becomes an indiscriminate list. Both case profile schools had selected a large number of goals and struggled with these (see Appendices D1 and D2). Some other secondary schools included a goal for each department. Here, 'department growth plan' might have been a more appropriate title than 'school growth plan'. Schools that chose three or

four goals, depending on the school's size, found more teachers became involved in more goals and that it was easier to monitor the progress of implementation and to focus staff development. Furthermore, teachers, students and parents were also more likely to be aware of and committed to the goals. In his study of organisational development, Senge (1990) also suggests that the best results come from smaller, more focused efforts, and Joyce et al. (1983) caution that *"it is easy to set too many goals and achieve none of them"* (p. 95). This is also consistent with Fullan's (1982) belief in starting small but thinking big.

5. Engagement in an Ongoing, Dynamic Process

Fullan (1982) cautions that change takes time. In Halton, each cycle of the growth planning process was intended to last approximately three years, to allow sufficient time for implementation of individual goals. In line with Patterson et al.'s (1986) argument that schools and school systems are not rational, a neat linear growth plan was rarely developed. Rather the growth plan evolved and changed as schools made ongoing adaptations to goals to meet students' needs (see, also, Evolutionary Development). This was consistent with the findings of Louis and Miles (1990). Growth planning also was not intended to be a pencil and paper exercise. The written part of the plan was far less important than the ideas within it. This was illustrated by a case profile school teacher's retort to the question, *"Will your growth plan make this a more effective school?"* In the answer, *"If it gets off the paper"*, she emphasised the need to focus on substance rather than packaging. Growth planning is a living and active process, and the plan itself is intended to be implemented, with the responsibility of all involved to see that this occurs.

6. Emphasis on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

Whereas 'gut reaction' (Glickman, 1989) was often used before the introduction of growth planning to determine areas of need and to evaluate the success of goal-setting endeavours, informal and formal data collection was an important part of this process. This has also been found to be the case by other researchers (Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990; Levine, 1991; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). Furthermore, the ongoing monitoring of implementation of goal strategies was stressed to ensure that the process was working well (see, also, The Difficulty of Measuring Change).

Evaluation, in particular, was a key stage. Although, sequentially, it appeared at the end, its impact was felt much earlier. In order to

measure change, it was necessary to plan evaluation methods early on and to carry out relevant pre-tests. Furthermore, formative evaluation was intended to occur during implementation. Thus, evaluation wove its threads throughout the entire process.

7. Use of School Effectiveness Characteristics in the Assessment Phase

This was one area where the theory of school effectiveness was linked with the practice of school improvement (see also Chapter 11). This was consistent with many projects in the United States (for example, Taylor, 1990). Teacher, parent and, subsequently, student questionnaires were available for schools to use as a starting point for discussion, although schools were encouraged to collect other data in the areas of student achievement and social development as well as specific contextual and external information.

8. Commitment to Instruction

Within the strategic directions it was mandated that at least one goal should be devoted to instructional development. In reality, the mandate was unnecessary, because of teachers' natural commitment to classroom processes over school processes, as described by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991). (For further discussion, see The Importance of Instruction.)

9. Recognition of Each School's Unique Context and Culture

Schools are like small societies. They are shaped by their history, context and the people within them (Rossman et al., 1988; Nias et al., 1989). As no two are the same, it makes sense that critical decisions about improvement efforts should be made at the level of the school (Goodlad, 1984). In Halton this was demonstrated both in their choice and individual interpretation of Ministry and district policies and in the varied approaches taken by different schools to growth planning, vision building and mission development, which was encouraged by the Task Force. Some more traditional secondary schools saw themselves as 'unique' and balked at the 'Halton jargon'. In these schools, administrators often initially presented new ideas in their own language. For example, several schools had a 'school plan' rather than a 'school growth plan'. Elsewhere, variations were demonstrated in the process and timing of mission statement development, the way in which plans were written down, and the number of goals incorporated. As Joyce et al. (1983) note, there is no one best way to approach school improvement.

10. Incorporation of Familiar Features of Halton's Culture

All too often, teachers perceive school and district administrators as engaging in fads. This tends to promote an attitude of, *"If I keep my head down for long enough, this wave will pass over me like many before it"*. Through a link with existing and well-used structures, some more successful features of Halton's past were able to be joined with new ideas. This was intended to create an element of stability within the change process. The existing appraisal processes for principals and teachers were used to make these links. The Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (C S and E) process was tailored to the growth plan such that an individual teacher could select particular areas of commitment. This raises another issue which is, 'Does every teacher need to be involved in every part of the plan?'. It would appear, from the more successful schools, that teachers were aware of all the goals and participated in school-wide staff development related to them. However, they were not expected to be involved in all of them at a high level. Rather, they participated to a greater or lesser degree according to their level of interest and comfort (Loucks and Hall, 1979), but might only have been actively involved at one time in one goal in terms of their C S and E commitment. The conservation of positive older structures and their link to new initiatives is recommended by other researchers (Holly and Southworth, 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

11. Acknowledgement of the School as the Centre of Change

In Halton's model, the school was not viewed as isolated, although it was seen as being the locus of decision-making. The link with the system was perceived as vital, both in terms of the system's broad directions and its support for schools according to their expressed needs. Indeed, the system, in its search for new ideas to support schools, engaged in simultaneous development. The view of the school as the centre of change is consistent with that of other research and theory (Sirotnik, 1987; Holly and Southworth, 1989; Levine and Lezotte,1990; Fullan, 199la; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

While these qualities help to explain what a school growth plan is, they do not answer the key question, 'Is it really necessary for a school to have a growth plan?'. Given the importance of a school's culture to its capacity for change, attempts to improve classroom instruction without attention to culture and the conditions outlined above are likely to be superficial and short-lived. The school growth planning process, because of its emphasis

on participatory decision-making, flexibility, and respect for schools' contexts and individual teachers' comfort level, addressed the school's culture while at the same time providing a focus on instruction and students' learning. This is consistent with Hopkins' (1991) view of the British school development plan. Certainly, interviewed teachers in Halton found the growth plan and its goals to provide a focus.

School improvement has been likened to a journey (Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan and Miles, 1992). Thus the planning process becomes the vehicle to reach the destination and the plan, itself, the map. It should not be overlooked, however, that the quality of the ongoing discussion and reflection is of considerably greater importance than the plan itself. Furthermore, if the growth plan itself becomes a substitute for school improvement or its intended outcomes (Sergiovanni, 1992), the whole process will become a pointless paper-and-pencil exercise.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) argue that improvement inside the classroom is dependent on improvement outside the classroom. That is, there has to be a focus on 'the total school'. The growth plan process attends to the total school and, in its focus, allows teachers to concentrate on issues of importance to them. Many of these are directly related to the classroom. Only through careful monitoring and evaluation can it be seen what impact the growth plan and its goals have. By 1991, however, with 96 per cent of elementary teachers and 88 per cent of their secondary counterparts reporting that it was important for their school to develop clearly stated goals, it is reasonable to assume that most Halton teachers believed in the value of growth planning.

The importance of shared decision-making was outlined above. This, and other fundamental facets of the school's culture will now be discussed.

Fundamental Conditions of School Growth Planning and the Importance of Culture

In Chapter 5, four features were described that appeared to distinguish between more and less successful pilot schools: shared vision; climate-setting; development of collegiality; and mission. These features were also portrayed in the case profiles, several vignettes, and, in various combinations, are consistent with findings of other researchers (Fullan, 1985; Holly and Southworth, 1989; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). These fundamental conditions appear to blend together to create a culture for change.

Culture has been increasingly examined for its influence on schools (Deal and Kennedy, 1983; Schein, 1985; Saphier and King, 1985; Deal, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1989; Nias et al., 1989; Hargreaves, 1989; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991), and represents the spirit of shared understanding, or 'this is the way we do things around here'. It may be articulated through rituals, symbols and roles or demonstrated in norms, beliefs and values, but in many ways is intangible and difficult to define precisely. School visitors may only discover the unspoken rules that govern its culture if, inadvertently, they break them.

While total agreement on every issue, or 'groupthink', is undesirable and inhibits individual imaginative ideas (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991), a successful school culture appears to be underpinned by collaboration. For this reason, it is important to perceive school growth planning as a process rather than merely a plan or four stages. The word 'plan' conjures to mind a paper document whereas 'process' implies considerably more than just paper. Essentially, the process cannot exist without attention to the fundamental conditions outlined in Chapter 5, although their precise timing may vary according to the specific school context. The Task Force identified the four concepts as prerequisites to successful growth planning (see Chapter 5). The word 'prerequisite', however, suggests that growth planning cannot take place unless this part of the process has previously occurred. If growth planning is truly unique, schools have to adapt timing to their needs. Indeed, once collegiality, for example, has been built, it has to be sustained throughout the process. Thus, it is more appropriate to view these as fundamental conditions.

The writing of this thesis was also impacted by these timing issues. Because many activities occurred simultaneously, it was difficult to outline them in chronological order. Thus, while writing is a chronological activity, life in schools is not. For example, the case profiles were written using a thematic approach. This could give the impression that these themes were separate entities whereas, in reality, they merged and many experiences occurred concomitantly. The same was true at system-level (see The Reality of Multiple Innovations and the Importance of Interconnections). It may be more helpful to view a school as the preparation of a carefully planned meal:

> *". . . a good school does not emerge like a prepackaged frozen dinner stuck for 15 seconds in a radar range; it develops from the slow simmering of carefully blended ingredients"* (Sizer, 1985, p. 22).

The initial impetus for these conditions' development and mobilisation for growth planning comes from the principal. It is to this role of leadership that discussion now turns.

The Role of Leadership

Despite contradictory findings in the Netherlands (van de Grift, 1990), the principal's role has been demonstrated to be vital in most school effectiveness and school improvement studies (for example, Fullan, 1985; Mortimore et al., 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; Louis and Miles, 1990). While the Effective Schools Project promoted the idea of the principal as instructional leader (Smith and Andrews, 1989), the emphasis on culture, shared values and beliefs, and understanding of change promoted throughout the Project influenced and changed this role. Successful principals exhibit a feel for the change process (Fullan, 1985), engage teacher commitment to a shared vision (Barth, 1990; Louis and Miles, 1990) and emanate their cultural beliefs through leadership by example (Nias et al., 1989). This was demonstrated in Halton's more effective schools, that included both case profile schools and two vignette schools, Oaklands and Robin Small (Leithwood, Jantzi and Dart, 1990). While these principals all worked in slightly different ways, unique to their personalities, all of them shaped and developed their schools' cultures, as described by Schein (1985). Furthermore, none of them focused on 'high-profile' strategies. Their leadership was subtle, but compelling (Fullan, 1992b).

For many principals, the leadership required was a change from the management focus for which they had been hired. Halton's hiring policies were influenced by increased knowledge of school effectiveness, school improvement, change, school culture and effective leadership. Over the course of the Project they changed considerably, in favour of people with a strong feel for the change process and an active knowledge of instruction. There were still, however, many principals from the old mould during the Project and some remain. For them, the growth planning process was a challenge and provoked anxiety.

It appears, therefore, that the leadership necessary for the kind of change undergone in Halton schools was a blend of instructional and transformational leadership. The latter includes the pursuit of common goals (Sergiovanni, 1990), empowerment, and the maintenance of a collaborative culture, teacher development and problem-solving (Leithwood, 1992).

Leadership has sometimes been seen as not only one person's domain (Nias et al., 1989; Sergiovanni, 1992). Some of Halton's more successful schools were, indeed, as Barth (1990) notes, a community of leaders. This took time to develop, although in a few cases an early action of the principal was to encourage shared decision-making and set up structures similar to Red Maple's programme planning team. In these schools the principal was viewed as the leader or coordinator of leaders, as described by Barth (1990), Glickman (1991), and Sergiovanni (1992).

Many schools had a teacher-led professional development committee responsible for workshop attendance and budget expenditure decisions. Gradually, many schools also developed a school growth plan team. Their success as leaders often depended on membership from throughout the school - that is, teachers as well as department heads - and their level of previous respect from peers. Teachers who had their colleagues' confidence were better placed to influence them regarding commitment to growth planning. Within these examples of shared leadership could be seen the seeds of learning communities, which is the next theme examined.

The Teacher as Learner

Fullan et al. (1990) view the teacher as learner as the centrepiece that links school and classroom improvement. This suggests that much of the responsibility for school improvement rests directly with teachers. While this research did not include an in-depth examination of classroom practice, the study of schools through interviews, questionnaires, documentation, and ongoing informal observation during attendance at meetings, consultation and staff development activities enabled the researcher to draw various conclusions.

The teachers saw themselves as engaged in ongoing professional development experiences. Certainly, there were many opportunities for professional development both outside and, in most cases, inside schools. These increasingly incorporated features known to enhance adult learning and skill transfer into the classroom (Joyce and Showers, 1982). While most elementary teachers also believed that they and their colleagues consistently looked for ways to improve their curriculum knowledge and instructional repertoire, a number of their secondary counterparts were less certain. Of a number of approaches to collaboration, joint work - that is the shared study of teaching that involves mutual observation and feedback - has been demonstrated to be

the most powerful (Little, 1990a). The evidence in Halton schools was that while collaboration outside the classroom to plan curriculum and instruction was increasingly a common feature, especially in elementary, but also some secondary schools (see secondary case profile and Vernon Heights vignette), little classroom observation occurred. The individualism of teaching has been noted elsewhere (Hargreaves, 1989; Rudduck, 1991).

It was difficult to determine to what extent reflection on practice and exploration occurred. These have been found to characterise problem-solving environments (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988). Within the teacher interviews, when teachers discussed specific instructional goals they were asked in what way they would change what they had done. While some respondents were reflective, self-critical and demonstrated a problem-solving approach, others gave superficial answers that suggested they had not thought about the issue. The importance of ongoing monitoring and self-evaluation has been described as an influence on school development (Holly and Southworth, 1989). This suggests a need for all teachers to reflect more critically on students' and their own learning.

The Effective Schools Project emphasised collegiality (see Chapter 5). To what extent this might have been mistaken for congeniality in some schools, as Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) caution, is uncertain. While many teachers felt their staffs were committed to change, growth and improvement, this was not true of all of them, especially secondary staff. Other research has demonstrated that more successful schools have norms of interaction and continuous improvement (Little, 1982). For the most part, the Effective Schools Project, in addition to the Collaborative Planning Network and many staff development initiatives that incorporated a team, mentoring or coaching approach, had considerably increased interaction and collaboration on some levels. While several schools and individuals exhibited norms of continuous improvement, in others, particularly at the earlier phase of school growth planning, there was a considerable way to go.

Various teacher development strategies have been outlined elsewhere, (Wideen and Andrews, 1987; Lieberman and Miller, 1991), and offer the opportunity to promote the teacher as learner. While certain intermediate outcomes of school improvement, including teacher attitudes, have been discussed elsewhere in this chapter (see The Difficulty of Measuring Change) and in Chapter 2, perhaps another one should be included; that of the teacher as learner. If school development and teacher development

are linked (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991), schools need to become learning organisations for all people within them (Barth, 1990; Sarason, 1990; Senge, 1990).

The building of learning organisations was one of many particular challenges for secondary schools. These will now be addressed.

The Complexity of Change in Secondary Schools

Change is not easy in any school. The Effective Schools Project findings, however, demonstrate the particular difficulties for secondary educators. These will not be discussed in as much detail as in Chapter 9. A summary of key themes, however, follows.

Hargreaves and Earl (1990) suggest that size and complexity, coupled with a departmental structure that leads to subject specialisation and balkanisation, characterise many secondary schools. This was true of many Halton secondary schools. It was, therefore, a considerably greater challenge to focus on school-wide improvement efforts.

The more effective schools adopted a vertical strategy of involvement of people at all levels of the organisation. For example, in such schools, teachers from various departments joined with department heads, an administrator, and, sometimes parents, students or a consultant, to form a school growth plan team. Less successful schools, in contrast, relied on the department heads to provide all the leadership for school growth planning. This resulted in less teacher commitment.

The principal's role has been seen to change from a managerial focus to a more change-oriented, collaborative transformational style (Leithwood, 1992). For the principals at secondary level, this was a particular challenge, given that few had little knowledge of subjects outside their own area and several entered administration from department headships in physical education where they had demonstrated considerable management skills. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the principal's gender may impact their success as a leader. Females have been found more likely to exhibit characteristics associated with collaboration and effective schooling (Shakeshaft, 1987; Marshall and Mitchell, 1987; Smith and Andrews, 1989). While it would be unwise to assume this is true for all principals (Nias et al., 1989), there were relatively more male principals in secondary schools and this may have had some impact.

The uncertainty expressed by a sizeable minority of teachers in response to some questionnaire items suggests that communication is a greater issue at secondary than elementary schools. It may also, however, reflect more critical thought processes on the part of secondary teachers which, if properly tapped, could produce considerable creativity.

Overall, this Project's findings confirm those of others who suggest that secondary schools are less prone to change than elementary schools (Berman and Gjelten, 1982; Fullan, 1985).

Other issues that impacted the schools will be discussed later. The discussion now turns to themes that were largely generated at system-level, although each of these also had relevance for the schools.

System-Level Themes

The three themes within this section include the role of central office, support, and the researcher's role.

The Role of Central Office

North American evidence is increasing that more effective schools are located in districts where close interaction occurs between schools and central office staff (Rosenholtz, 1989; Coleman and LaRocque, 1990; Fullan, 1991a). Indeed, Rosenholtz (1989) found districts with strongly bureaucratic structures were considerably less effective.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Task Force envisioned, as one of its guiding principles, that the system should provide broad directions, in-service and resources to support individual school plans - in short, a framework for change - but that schools themselves would devise and implement plans appropriate to their own context. This, essentially, was a 'top-down, bottom-up' approach to change (Eubanks and Levine, 1983; Lezotte, 1989b), related to Purkey and Smith's (1983) 'nested layers' in which each level of the organisation sets the context for the level below it. To what extent was this achieved?

In the Project's first year, while their intentions were honourable, the Task Force formulated plans that would have locked schools into specific activities. Through feedback they realised this to be the case and, from this time tried to ensure that the Project neither be seen as activity for a privileged group nor a mandate. Interestingly, it was during this first year that significant thought was devoted to outcome measurement. Once

the Project took on more school-based directions, energy was diverted to the school growth planning process and staff development (see, also, The Difficulty of Measuring Change).

With the development of the three strategic directions, the district enshrined into policy the concept of the school as the centre of change through its commitment to the school growth planning process. This is similar to descriptions by Sirotnik (1987) and Fullan (1991a), and Britain's Local Education Authority's development plan which *"establishes a fit between LEA policies and plans and those of schools"* (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991, p. 96). Nonetheless, through a further emphasis on instruction, the district also ensured that important areas would be examined in an ongoing way (see, also, The Importance of Instruction). Schools were expected to discuss their school growth plans with their superintendent, although this was the extent of the external monitoring process. Central office also provided support in the form of money, a small research and assessment service locating resources and new ideas, facilitators, staff development and implementation assistance (see Support). Similar functions for external support staff have been highlighted elsewhere (Crandall et al., 1982; Louis and Miles, 1990).

Most significant, however, was the support staff's reorganisation. This is discussed in some detail in another section (see The Influence of Politics), but merits further mention. District involvement in school improvement is important (Lezotte, 1989a, 1989b). However, many schools have a history of being 'dumped on' by central office personnel, particularly in the area of curriculum documents (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). Indeed, Louis and Miles (1990) describe relationships between urban high schools and their central offices as 'enduring bad marriages'. This type of centralisation, where policies are restrictive, superficial solutions adopted, and timelines unrealistic, does not work. Neither, though, does total decentralisation, where schools are allowed to drift without support or monitoring (Fullan, 1991a). In Halton, the reorganisation of system support staff was another way to ensure that schools could set their own directions but that appropriate follow-up and support would be available, and that people in central office scanned the external environment for new ideas and provincial government initiatives.

Anxiety and stress are familiar symptoms of the early phase of change efforts (Fullan, 1991a). More than any other group in the system, the support staff suffered from these. This was reasonable given the dramatic change in their role compared with the other groups impacted

by the Project. While principals were encouraged to share decision-making, they were able to approach this gradually, and for some this has not yet occurred. In contrast, within the consultative staff, specialists had to become generalists virtually overnight and for some central office coordinators, their ability to 'serve' the schools declined drastically once the mandating of new curriculum documents was no longer an option. They had to find different, people-oriented skills to help them approach their role in another way. For some, this was extremely difficult. Anxiety manifested itself in a variety of ways, many of which were perceived as resistance. Fullan and Miles (1992) caution reformers against the automatic labeling of 'resistance', because attention becomes diverted from real implementation problems. Further research is necessary to understand these people's reaction to change, for in many cases, once implementation was underway, they began to 'get on with it' and to discover new meaning or see through a new paradigm (Barker, 1985). In other cases, however, the grieving for 'days gone by' still continues, three years after the changes were proposed.

A key facet of central office's role is that of support, which is the next theme to be discussed.

Support

Improvement efforts are 'resource hungry' (Louis and Miles, 1990). This may include training, materials and equipment, teacher release time and money, which buys other forms of support. Because of Halton's focus on staff development, both in terms of training and assistance, this will be discussed separately from other forms of support.

The Role of Staff Development

The essential role of staff development is captured by Fullan (1991a):

> *"As long as there is the need for improvement, namely, forever, there will be the need for professional development"* (p.344).

Countless other studies of school effectiveness and school improvement have also confirmed the crucial role of assistance and staff development (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Wideen and Andrews, 1987; Mortimore et al., 1988; Rosenholtz., 1989; Lezotte, 1989b; Louis and Miles, 1990; Wallace et al., 1990). Most of these researchers note, however, that assistance has to be appropriate, tailored to meet an expressed need, intense, varied and

sustained. The 'one-shot' workshop approach does not work (Fullan, 1982).

In Halton, staff development was a key strategy for change related to the Effective Schools Project and other complementary initiatives (see The Reality of Multiple Innovations and the Importance of Interconnections). Indeed, its importance was highlighted in its prominence as one of three strategic directions outlined in summer 1989. To what extent did Halton's staff development fulfill the success criteria defined in other studies? Certainly, at the start of the Project, offerings were much of the 'one-shot' type. Even though some series were offered, they were disjointed and not linked to follow-up (see Chapter 4). Curriculum specialists also offered a multitude of workshops in their own areas, epitomised in the annual professional development day when they decided on presentation topics and teachers had to choose among these.

Halton did have an ongoing tradition of broader, process-oriented staff development opportunities related to leadership and change - in the form of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Loucks and Hall, 1979), process consultation and conflict resolution. This reflected a culture of interest in process and collaboration. Nonetheless, until the advent of the Project and, more specifically, school-based planning, there was no coherent framework within which these offerings could be placed.

As the Project unfolded, and staff development was reorganised to support it (see Chapters 4 and 5), the links between the various forms of development and the perspectives on change (House, 1981) became more apparent, and were further enhanced by the partnership with the Learning Consortium. Staff development opportunities in the area of specific instructional strategies mirrored most closely the technological perspective, although the incorporation of knowledge of adult learning principles acknowledged the importance of individuals with different beliefs and values. Attention to process skills, found important in similar studies of organisational change (for example, Harrison et al., 1989), reflected the impact of the political perspective of change, while the emphasis on understanding and working towards collaboration and the development of shared values, beliefs and vision captured the spirit of the cultural perspective.

Leadership development was particularly significant to the entire change process. Rosenholtz (1989) described 'moving' districts as those that emphasised principal selection and learning opportunities. In Halton, not only were these emphasised, but they were self-sustaining. Principals

and vice principals had their own professional development committee which conducted needs assessments, and organised and developed appropriate in-service for them. In these, they incorporated opportunities for peer-coaching and follow-up as well as time for principals to share experiences with each other (see Chapter 5). It should also not be forgotten that it was the principals themselves who initiated the ongoing focus on school effectiveness. Increasing the capacity of principals has also been stressed elsewhere (Fullan, 1985).

In terms of staff development for instructional strategies, McLaughlin and Marsh (1990) distinguish between staff training and staff support activities. Training is skill-specific, while support helps assimilate the strategy. In Halton, while efforts to increase support through coaching, mentoring and consultative support in classrooms grew, particularly in the latter years of the Project, the emphasis was still on front-end training, or as Little (1989) has described it, 'service delivery'. Certainly, in schools that completed a collaboration survey developed by the researcher, the lowest percentage agreements were always recorded for observation in colleagues' classrooms and follow-up discussions of teaching. This is consistent with Little's (1989) findings in her California staff development study. Thus, while 64 per cent of secondary teachers and 77 per cent of their elementary counterparts reported the regular sharing of teaching skills and strategies, this rarely included the powerful component of observation (see, also, The Teacher as Learner).

Follow-up of training can be enhanced when qualified consultants with appropriate skills are available to help. As Fullan (1991a) points out, however, consultants do not always posses knowledge and skills both in the content and process of change. This was true of many of Halton's consultative staff, and even when new consultants were appointed, many were unfamiliar with the change process, school growth planning and the impact of culture. Since the completion of this research, many consultants have begun to participate in instructional training with school teams, as well as acquiring a more thorough understanding of change and relevant process skills. The board has also structured training institutes to allow time between sessions for school teams to practise skills, give feedback and coach each other, consistent with Joyce and Showers' (1982) model.

The School Growth Plan Team Training adopted similar strategies: that is, school teams that included an administrator and, sometimes, a consultant, time between sessions to try out strategies, and the availability

of trainers to work on-site with growth plan teams or the whole staff. From observations of the first two groups of participants, within a year successful teams made considerable strides in their schools in terms of engaging the interest and commitment of other staff members. In retrospect, although the team who planned the training were more knowledgeable themselves about its process and content by 1990 when it was first offered, schools needed the information before this time. It may have been more appropriate to follow Fullan and Miles' (1992) advice to *"Do, then plan . . . and do and plan some more"* (p.749).

Creative thinking also provided the opportunity for extra staff development. The Beyond Effectiveness conference was arranged such that opportunities were available, at no cost, for leaders and staff to have access to international authorities on school effectiveness, school improvement and change.

Staff development carried out within the schools by teachers and administrators should not be forgotten. It was at least as vital as that generated at system level, and yet in many ways it grew out of system-level initiatives and was enhanced by them. Teachers interviewed at Red Maple and in other schools noted its value. It also carried extra credibility when the person offering a workshop was seen as an 'in-house expert'. Through the Partners in the Classroom programme, all first year teachers had a mentor, and a follow-up study showed that many second and third year teachers retained their mentor (Rekrut et al., 1992). Some also coached their mentor, demonstrating ongoing learning, regardless of stage of career. Some schools also had informal mentoring and coaching programmes (see, also, The Teacher as Learner for further examples of school-based staff development).

Other Support

Schools received a variety of other forms of support from the district during the Effective Schools Project. Financial support has been demonstrated elsewhere to have a positive impact (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1991a). Indeed, Louis and Miles maintain that for significant improvement efforts, schools require at least $50,000 to $100,000 (25,000 to 50,000 pounds sterling). In their survey schools, the average amount available to schools over their regular budget was $800. Their case study schools had considerably larger amounts. Although Louis and Miles point out that the way the money was used was more important than the amount, they still advocate an enormously large amount. The reality in Canadian and most British

schools, with possible exception of city technology colleges, is that schools do not have access to the same range of private funders and foundations. It would seem that a statement that informs schools that success is dependent on vast sums of money takes away the responsibility for improvement from people within the school. Furthermore, it encourages cynics to believe that what they do will make no difference unless it is backed by significant funding. School effectiveness research clearly demonstrates that this is not the case. It is the actions of people that distinguish between more and less effective schools (Rutter et al., 1979; Mortimore et al., 1988). A small amount of money, however, can be a motivator, as was seen in Halton.

Through their superintendents, schools could apply for up to $1500 for their school effectiveness projects (see Chapter 3). This amount would buy less than 15 days of release time for an entire staff, and yet the impetus for change was substantial. Teachers, gratified by the recognition, commitment and trust inherent in a small amount of money, devoted significant time over and above that provided through supply coverage.

Another area of system support, particularly relevant to the assessment and evaluation phases of the growth planning cycle was that related to research, identified by the Task Force as a key need throughout its deliberations (see Chapters 3 and 5). The provision of needs assessment instruments, help with analysis, interpretation of results, as well as methods to evaluate school growth were all necessary (Stoll, 1992). In this area, it was also the researcher's role to help the schools become aware of the need to assess and evaluate (see, also, The Difficulty of Measuring Change). Other school effectiveness project researchers have also found that the amount of technical assistance for schools undertaking such change efforts is important (Lezotte, 1989b; Levine, 1991). For one person to carry this responsibility for more than 80 schools was an enormous task. Perhaps, with an increased emphasis on accountability, school districts will devote more personnel to this endeavour. Unless they do, it will be very difficult to provide the support necessary to engender commitment to assessment and evaluation. On the occasions that time did not permit the researcher to visit a particular school to discuss needs assessment with the principal, school growth plan team, department heads, or the entire staff, she frequently found that the results were not used.

Facilitation of growth planning, team- or vision-building and mission statement development was another frequently requested source of

system-level support. Through the process consultation programme (see Chapter 4), facilitators were available to schools. Here was another example of the incorporation of useful facets of the old culture into the new culture (see The Nature of School Growth Planning). Support for process - that is, working together effectively - has also been found to be vital in other school improvement efforts (Joyce et al., 1983; Harrison et al., 1989).

One role, already mentioned within the discussion on support, was that of the researcher. As the following discussion illustrates, however, the researcher's role was considerably more complex.

The Researcher's Role

In most research studies, even those that involve detailed case study approaches, the researcher is an outsider. Sometimes, the researcher might offer to help within the school or classroom, and take on the role of participant observer (for example, Armstrong, 1980; Nias et al.,1989). Nonetheless, the researcher becomes involved solely for the duration of the study. This research has differed in that the researcher was also an employee of the school district that she studied. Furthermore, she was actively involved in the project under examination.

Case study researchers are sometimes prone to use their investigation to prove a preconceived idea (Becker, 1967; Yin, 1989). Nias et al. (1989) comment on their study of five primary schools:

> *"To become an insider is to risk losing the outsider's ability to record and comment with detachment, yet until we became insiders there were things that we failed to perceive and much that we did not understand"* (p. 6).

This statement captures the dilemma of the internal researcher: maintenance of a neutral stance while attempting to 'get under the surface' of a project. Furthermore, the internal researcher may also have a vested interest in the project's success.

Regarding this study, two questions need to be addressed. The first is whether the Effective Schools Project would have been any different if the researcher had not been involved. That is, 'To what extent did the researcher influence the course of the Project?'. The second is, 'Given the researcher's involvement, to what extent was she able to remain detached in order to provide a neutral examination of its progress and impact?'.

In answer to the first question, it is fair to suggest that the nature of the Project was influenced to an extent by the researcher, especially at the outset (see Chapter 2). Indeed, she had been invited to join the Task Force to bring ideas from British school effectiveness research, and the final school growth plan model had its origins in other British models (McMahon et al., 1984; ILEA, 1986). Thus, a major facet of her role throughout was the linking of theory to practice. The researcher also had more time to devote to Task Force activities than other members, especially in the earlier years, as this was a fundamental part of her role description. Most of this time, as described in Chapter 2, was devoted to meeting individual schools' needs. In other ways, she attempted to be an equal member of the Task Force, even when group decisions were contrary to her beliefs as a school effectiveness researcher. Given that the district's specific intent, therefore, was to introduce school effectiveness research findings into the system and schools and the researcher was brought to Canada to help with this, perhaps the second question is more critical, namely whether the researcher was able to be impartial in this inquiry.

The role of research is not well understood in many Canadian school districts, and there appears to be an ambivalence on the part of senior administrators towards academic research. District researchers in the past did not always endear themselves to educators because, as one superintendent described it, *"They answered questions that no-one asked"*. Consequently, although a few of the larger Ontario boards had several researchers, many, Halton included, had only one and some had none at all. Furthermore, many school districts traditionally had a tendency not to evaluate innovations systematically but, rather, perceived implementation as a demonstration of success in itself. The recent emphasis on increased accountability is changing this. Nonetheless, in the mid 1980's, given the competition for budgets, little money was set aside to employ external researchers to evaluate new projects.

When the researcher came to the district and was faced with an innovation, she frequently had to ask the question, 'Does it make a difference?'. Given the limited knowledge of other Task Force members in evaluation, the role of monitoring the Project naturally fell to the researcher (the difficulties of measuring change are examined in a later section). It was important to the researcher, both as a relatively recent outsider but more importantly as the sole monitor, to maintain a neutral perspective. In her view, an increased understanding of the change process in this district, through impartial study, was of equal significance to her desire, as a Task Force member, that the Project be successful.

Occasionally, she would be faced with the reality of school board politics - for example, in the senior administration's decision to give some, but not all, of the effective schools questionnaire results to political trustees (see, also, The Influence of Politics), or an ethical dilemma between the maintenance of promised confidentiality to schools over survey results, and concern regarding negative teacher attitudes in a specific school. In the latter instance, she was bound by her neutrality as a researcher and the assurance of anonymity. In the former, as an employee, albeit a researcher desirous of openness, she had to conform to decisions made by her superiors. Unquestionably, the role of internal researcher created, at times, tension within the researcher as she strove to maintain an unbiased perspective. The benefits of her proximity, open and ongoing access to schools to serve their needs and collect her own data, however, led to a more detailed understanding of the district and its Project. These, for her, considerably outweighed the disadvantages.

Thus, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, the researcher played several roles in this Project: that of Task Force member; occasional leader in terms of input of ideas; observer; and commentator. Perhaps more fundamentally, through close involvement with schools, she linked research and practice, two concepts that in many ways reflected the two paradigms school effectiveness and school improvement. While school effectiveness is a body of knowledge that describes the end state of activity, school improvement describes the practice required to achieve that end state.

Thus far, issues that pertain more specifically to the schools or the system have been examined. The discussion now turns to six themes that were evidenced equally in the schools and throughout the system.

School- and System-Level Themes

The themes are: the importance of instruction; evolutionary development; the reality of multiple innovations and the importance of interconnections; the influence of politics; the difficulty of measuring change; and the multidimensionality of change.

The Importance of Instruction

It may appear obvious to discuss the importance of the teaching-learning process in a school effectiveness project. However, much of the emphasis in school-based management efforts is on the reorganisation of decision-

making and governance structures (David, 1989). Furthermore, most school effectiveness research has been criticised for its lack of emphasis on classroom processes (Reynolds, 1989).

The Effective Schools Project confirms the well-documented need for a link between classroom instruction and school development (Fullan, 1985; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Fullan et al., 1990; Levine, 1991). Of Halton's three strategic directions, one, school-based planning, came directly from the Task Force's work. This, in itself however, would not have been enough to engender meaningful teacher commitment because teachers generally derive meaning from their work in the classroom (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). If *"Educational change depends on what teachers do and think"* (Fullan, 1991a, p. 117), teacher involvement is essential to the success of a change effort. The connection with the Learning Consortium provided a practical model for instruction. When the strategic plan was developed, it appeared that instruction could both provide a key focus for the school growth plan and the meaningful link for teachers. Indeed, the majority of schools focused most of their goals on classroom improvement, although early attempts at growth planning included many of the climate and collegiality issues. Until these had been given attention, teachers, especially in secondary schools, were not particularly interested in instructional development. Thus, growth planning appeared to have two phases.

In the early phase, schools focused on some of the fundamental conditions discussed earlier, for example, student behaviour, physical environment, parental involvement, communication and collaboration, although they also had instructional goals at this time. The climate and collegiality issues were, for some schools, necessary evils that had to be given attention but did not engender much excitement. Indeed, in many secondary schools in particular, these were seen as issues that were really the principal's and vice principals' responsibility.

The later phase of growth planning saw schools more actively engaged in instructional issues, using techniques derived from earlier efforts, for example collaborative planning, to enhance their newer foci. Schools in this phase were also more likely to focus on evaluation (see, also, The Difficulty of Measuring Change). These two phases are consistent with Hopkins' (1991) description of root and branch innovations. By offering workshops and institutes on proven instructional models, the system was able to influence school's decisions to focus on instruction without mandating any particular approach. For example, as a result of the system's focus on cooperative group learning, several schools

subsequently chose this particular strategy for further development. In this way, the system offered menus rather than mandates (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). At the same time, the district also encouraged individual schools' own choices for development (Fullan, 1985). District support staff sometimes found that schools knew more about a particular teaching technique than they did, which required professional development on their part to keep pace with these schools.

The flexibility of the school growth planning process was also demonstrated in the next theme - evolutionary development.

Evolutionary Development

Schools and systems are not rational (Patterson et al., 1986). As such, they do not follow a neatly packaged approach to change. In Halton this proved the case both in the Effective Schools Project at system level and the growth planning process in the schools.

While at the end of the first year of the Project the Task Force had a plan of what should happen throughout the system and the outcomes they anticipated, due to input from other people and the context and culture of the system, the Project evolved in different ways. Was, however, the integrity of the Task Force's original plan maintained?

It is noticeable that the first year of the Project was largely theoretical and may have remained this way had not Fullan advised the Task Force to *"start somewhere"*. Looking back at the four original guiding principles, however, (see Chapter 3), these were maintained throughout the research. Schools were the key focus, the system provided broad direction and support, existing features of the culture were incorporated, and the process was ongoing. Most of the Task Force's wishes in the first two years were fulfilled but not always in the manner or timeline expected. For example: the effective schools implementation team (see Chapter 4) became the School Services area teams; school effectiveness survey data for assessment, recommended in 1988, became a reality in 1990; and the endorsement of the school growth plan as an organiser and process for school planning and improvements, recommended in 1988, also took more than a year to become a reality.

The area of assessment is particularly interesting (see, also, The Difficulty of Measuring Change) in that as this thesis is being written, a secondary school profile, first mooted in 1987-88 and the basis for

assessment in the schools, is finally being developed. In this instance, the delay has partly resulted from the need to work with a group of non-educators in the computing department who, with exception of their superintendent, had no involvement in the Project other than the provision of occasional access to data. Their priorities traditionally related to student administration data management and its use for business rather than educational purposes. Furthermore, their style of operation was more bureaucratic. Thus, change has taken even longer with this group.

Other aspects of assessment at system level have evolved to fit Ontario's approach to assessment (see The Difficulty of Measuring Change). At this time, considerable effort is being addressed to meet the senior management's statement that indicators of effectiveness in student achievement should be defined (see Chapter 3).

The implementation profile (see Chapter 5) reflected the evolutionary nature of development in schools. While it appeared that there were conditions for successful growth planning, they did not always occur before planning started. Indeed, the changing, meandering nature of goal development and implementation was consistent with that described by Louis and Miles (1990) in their urban high school study. On the basis that change takes at least three years for a single innovation and five to 10 years for more substantial reforms (Fullan, 1991a), it would be highly unlikely that amendments would not be made to innovations over that period of time, given external pressures, societal change, internal monitoring and changes in interest. Furthermore, changes in personnel will also impact a school's processes and development (see The Multidimensionality of Change).

The phenomenon of change thus appears to be evolutionary. Consequently, the approach taken by many schools mirrored the philosophy espoused by a business executive cited by Peters and Waterman (1982): 'ready, fire, aim'.

As already discussed in Chapter 2, the very developmental nature of the Project necessitated a similar approach to this research. While it might have provided a neat design to have outlined at the start of the research exactly how each step would be evaluated, this proved impossible, as the Project's course was unknown until it was underway. This is the challenge of examining school improvement. It is a messy phenomenon, but it is real.

Another part of the complexity of school improvement is that it is difficult to separate all the components. This is the topic of the next theme.

The Reality of Multiple Innovations and the Importance of Interconnections

Much of what is known about change has resulted from the study of the implementation of discrete innovations, for example a particular approach to reading or an instructional strategy. The reality, however, is that schools and school systems balance multiple innovations (Anderson, 1989; Wallace, 1991). Normally districts do not interrelate and coordinate their policies, so that any given project, no matter how good it is in its own right, fails to make a sustained impact (Zywine et al., 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992). Indeed, Sarason (1990) maintains that educational reform has persistently failed because educators have dabbled in innovations one at a time.

The Effective Schools Project was only one of a series of initiatives within Halton and should be viewed from that perspective. The other major initiatives at the time were system reviews of curriculum and special education, the partnership with the Learning Consortium and, most recently, preparation for the Ministry of Education's restructuring of Ontario schooling. Through its reorganisation of staff development and support staff, Halton attempted to weave together the different initiatives. These were ultimately articulated in the three strategic directions. Thus, reform in Halton centred on the simultaneous development and interrelationships of key components of the system (Fullan and Miles, 1992).

Within schools as well, teachers were also faced with a multiplicity of initiatives. In order to make the learning experience more coherent for students, some means of integrating these initiatives was necessary. Fragmented solutions are often a short-term response to the problem of overload in schools (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). The school growth plan, however, through its focus on a small number of key priorities, provided a way of dealing with multiple innovations and overload. It gave schools the opportunity to say 'no' to further demands from the system as, indeed, the more successful schools did.

Not only were there multiple innovations that needed to be connected coherently, but there was a further subtle link between the innovations and culture. The findings of the Effective Schools Project concurred with those of other researchers who maintain that all change efforts cannot

only focus on specific innovations or goals to be achieved. They must also emphasise how these will fit in with the school's culture and organisation (Joyce et al., 1983; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992). For example, a school lacking a collaborative culture may select computer technology as a goal. Despite whole-school training, computer usage may not increase because it is not the norm for people to work together, try out ideas and discuss difficulties with each other. As Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) point out, *"forces outside the classroom heavily influence the quality of classroom life"* (p.11). Simultaneous focus on the content and culture of change can be likened to seeing the world through bifocal spectacles. Both lenses are necessary for perceptual clarity and coherence.

It also appeared that school development and system development went hand-in-hand. One could not be maintained without the other. Personnel at both sites needed to learn about change, school culture and school-based planning, and where their particular role fitted into the jigsaw. Essentially, the strategic plan at system level mirrored the growth plan at school level, and enshrined the district's culture into policy.

A cultural perspective on change was, therefore, key to this Project, but the politics of change were equally important (see, also, The Multidimensionality of Change).

The Influence of Politics

One theme that surfaced continuously was the political ramifications of change. This was both an issue at macro level, in the form of official groups and organisations, and at micro level, through power relationships.

Macro-Politics: The Role of Trustees and Political Process

School systems are not isolated from the outer world, nor should they be. While educators may be responsible for creating and developing many school improvement innovations, their initiation frequently depends on the approval of an elected body of non-educators, unfamiliar with the theory or rationale that underpins them. Indeed, many reforms are even proposed and mandated by non-educators, as exemplified in Britain's Education Reform Act of 1988.

The implications of this for the Effective Schools Project were profound. Throughout, the Task Force superintendent, in conjunction with the

director, had to decide how much information to give political trustees to promote their understanding of Project goals. In the case of the original assessment policy, for example, trustees were confused by the detail. For them, the key implications were related to cost. This was unfortunate, because without clear understanding it is difficult to engender commitment for change (Fullan, 1991a).

Their decision concerning support staff also appeared to demonstrate a lack of understanding of and commitment to the integrity of the three strategic directions, one of which was directly focused on staff development. Schlechty (1990) believes that it is not the responsibility of board members to lead reform or restructuring. Rather, they should identify reform-oriented leaders within the system to ensure a direction that supports community values. This may be accepted by some trustees but often there are board members whose political aspirations cause them to desire more power over the process within the system.

The finding regarding board support for improvement efforts is consistent with findings from other districts (for example, Wallace et al., 1990). The reality of such improvement efforts is that while it is acceptable and, indeed, inevitable that the initiators may not be entirely clear as to the process and outcomes of their work if it is evolutionary, politicians do not like to deal with such uncertainty.

The Project had further political ramifications at the macro level. While the Task Force did not include representatives from every key group in the system, each stage of its deliberations were shared widely, and final documents or policies were not shown to trustees before they had been approved by superintendents, and the elementary and secondary principals' associations. This slowed down the process considerably but was necessary for commitment. It should be noted that the presidents of the teachers' federations attended principals' association meetings. Furthermore, all other district committees responsible for development of policies also had representatives from the elementary and secondary teachers' federations, as well as principal, superintendent, support staff and trustee representatives. Traditionally, the relationship between teacher federations and administration has been good in Halton.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the Task Force did not contain teacher representatives. Certainly, the concepts of school effectiveness and school growth planning took longer to take hold among teaching staff than principals. Nonetheless, the system's increasing emphasis on shared

decision-making had an early impact within some schools. Furthermore, in terms of the researcher's own role, all instruments were either co-developed with people within schools or sent to a variety of teachers, as well as principals and superintendents, for comment.

The schools themselves were also affected by the political context that surrounded them. This is consistent with findings of other research studies (see review by Good and Brophy, 1986; Ball, 1987). Each school had its own trustee, as well as parents and local community, all of whom had views on education. Schools were also the target of ministry reform efforts (for example, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984; Government of Ontario, 1989).

On a more subtle level, the Project also demonstrated the existence of power relationships at all levels of the system and schools.

Micro-Politics: The Balance of Power

Sarason (1990) maintains that educational reforms continuously fail because attention is not paid to the alteration of power relationships among those in the system and within the classroom. The balance of power was a significant feature in this study. In some ways it was shifted, causing anxiety to various players involved. In others, little change appeared to have occurred.

At system level, the Task Force's intention was that decision-making should be moved to school level. This would require a reorientation of thinking on the part of central office personnel from a leadership mentality to one of service. As House (1981) points out, the relationship between schools and school districts is characterised by the attempts of the latter to control the former while the former attempt to resist these efforts. Over the first few years of the Project, the Task Force superintendent faced many struggles with the other superintendents. Each had favoured projects to which they wished budget to be committed. It was not even easy persuading them to support the offer of money to schools for effectiveness projects, and once this had been finally agreed, a few of the school superintendents wanted to assign the money 'their way', rather than through an agreed-upon process.

Later, when the implementation profile was available, one school superintendent, in particular, could see no reason why all schools should not be expected to be at the refined level of each concept within a short space of time, and wanted to monitor his schools intensely to ensure this

occurred. Other instances of power relationships at the superintendent level occurred during the development of the strategic plan and supporting reports, once area teams had been set up, and when the linkage team was organised. In this instance, superintendents were concerned that system-level decisions might be made by other people rather than them.

The reaction of consultative staff to school-based planning and their reorganisation to support it was consistent with that of their counterparts in other research studies (for example, Harrison et al., 1989). Schlechty (1990) envisions a radical role change for curriculum specialists who, in the past, have been perceived as 'central office functionaries' and 'quasi-supervisors'. He also maintains that those who oppose decentralisation grossly overestimate central office's amount of control in a centralised system. Rather, he believes, curriculum guidelines are not taken seriously by teachers in many systems. To some extent this was true in Halton. Some subject coordinators were not respected by school educators because they were rarely seen in schools, and yet they generated many guidelines and supporting documents that they expected to be implemented after 'one-off' in-services.

The central office staff had been less involved than principals in the first three years of the Task Force's work. They had a representative on the Task Force, although he was the only generalist within the group and, in that sense, did not represent the cultural values of the group, particularly a belief in subject specificity. While ongoing feedback was given to them and their input sought, little interest emanated from them. This may have been for two reasons. First, more attention was devoted to bringing principals 'on board' as they were seen as the key players and, as a group, wielded more power throughout the system than consultative staff. Second, while school growth planning and school effectiveness clearly had implications for schools, it had little relevance at the time for the subject specialists. As Fullan (1991a) has noted, it is only when people experience a change's implementation that it has personal meaning for them.

Principals were also involved in the power network in several ways. First, the Task Force superintendent deliberately selected nine principals for the Task Force who were respected and supported by their peers, in recognition that if they were involved in and became committed to the Project, there was greater likelihood that they would convince their peers of its relevance. Second, in terms of choices for coordinators of the area

teams, two of the three selected were seconded principals, given that the principals did not perceive many of the existing consultative staff to have a sufficient understanding of schools' needs. Third was the principals' reaction to increased power and autonomy through school-based planning. On one level, they were very pleased to be able to work with their schools to shape an ideal future. On another level, according to their individual personalities, they approached this task in different ways.

While most principals continued to treat support staff with dignity, some abused their power through expectations that service would be delivered immediately, even if a consultant or coordinator was responsible for more than 80 schools. More significantly, however, was the way they approached school growth planning. Ball (1987) describes how headteachers are faced with the problem of maintaining control while trying to generate enthusiasm and commitment. In Halton, some principals had difficulty in finding this balance and in the involvement of teachers in decision-making. This could be perceived at the School Growth Plan Team Training where some principals or vice principals dominated all discussions and decisions, while others took a much lower profile. The secondary case profile, in particular, illustrates a principal with a clear vision and yet one who encouraged his staff to take responsibility for decision-making (see Appendix D2). Overall, Halton staff were generally positive but not unanimous that they were involved in decision-making in their schools. Unquestionably, schools are places in which control is a key issue (Nias et al., 1989). As Sarason (1990) points out, it is difficult for teachers to create and sustain the conditions conducive to students' development if these conditions do not exist for them. This is supported by McNeil (1988) and Holly and Southworth (1989) who suggest that teachers control their students much in the way they are controlled by their administrators.

What of student involvement? This seemed to be an area where tradition was maintained. Both elementary and secondary questionnaire results suggested that students were nowhere near as involved in decisions as they might have been, nor did all teachers believe that they should be involved. This was borne out in the secondary and, particularly, elementary case profiles although less student involvement might be expected in classes with very young children. Results of an effective schools questionnaire administered to secondary students throughout Halton in 1992, after the completion of this study, also demonstrate that while many (71%) felt that they were encouraged to think for themselves, only half believed that teachers listened when they had an opinion about school-related issues, for example rules. Furthermore, approximately

one quarter did not feel that their teachers were interested in them as people or that they were treated with understanding and concern, and one third were either not sure or did not believe that they were given opportunities at school to take on extra jobs and/or responsibilities. The engagement of students and their involvement in school life is critical, and yet some teachers, it appears, teach subjects, not children (Sarason, 1990). Fullan (1991a) points out that adults *"rarely think of students as participants in a process of change and organizational life"* (p. 170), and yet students are the reason for teachers' existence. The ramifications of non-involvement of students in their classroom and school experiences are worrying. It should be no surprise that students would rather be elsewhere if their opinions are not sought and they have no opportunity to determine decisions that affect them (Sarason, 1990).

Students are not the only other people with a stake in school improvement. The role of parents is also significant. School effectiveness research has demonstrated both student and parent involvement to be essential (Mortimore et al., 1988). School improvement researchers have also recommended parental involvement in improvement efforts (Joyce et al., 1983; Holly and Southworth, 1989; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). Certainly, in the elementary schools parents were involved in many ways. Their level of input, however, into the growth planning process was relatively low and, more significantly, a sizeable minority of elementary teachers did not seem to feel that there was a particular need for their participation in this aspect of school life. The same was true of secondary teachers, although parental involvement at the secondary level was generally lower. Many teachers question whether it is appropriate for parents, as lay people, to judge what they do. Equally, many parents are not comfortable being placed in this situation. In the increased move to accountability, however, school-based management schemes in Britain, Australia and the United States are involving parents within school governance teams. Time will tell whether this ultimately benefits pupils. The evidence at this time is scarce (Fullan, 1991a). As Fullan (1991a) notes, most parents find more meaning in activities specifically related to their own child than in school-wide projects. This certainly suggests that parents should be clear on what their child is being taught. It is also reasonable to encourage feedback from parents about the quality of the programme and to obtain their views generally about the school although it may also be appropriate to educate parents regarding the reasons for particular teaching methods and resources. Certainly, in situations similar to the elementary case profile where parents were more involved and supportive, it appeared to make it easier for the school to pursue its

goals. Further study, however, is required to examine the full impact of parental participation in school growth planning given that only a nominal number of parents are involved.

This is only one area of evaluation that it would be important to carry out. The measurement of change, however, is not straightforward, as the next section highlights.

The Difficulty of Measuring Change

One evident theme from the start of the Project until the research's completion was the challenge posed by the measurement of change. A fundamental feature of school effectiveness research is the demonstration of effectiveness in terms of student outcomes. School improvement studies, in contrast, have emphasised process over outcomes, although recently proponents of school improvement have also stressed the importance of evaluating change efforts (Fullan, 1991a; Ainscow and Hopkins, 1992).

In Halton's Project, difficulties were experienced both at system and school levels. Because Ontario did not have a history of standardised testing, assessment traditionally centred around participation in international assessments, provincial curriculum reviews, a few locally developed tests, ability tests normed in the United States and of questionable use in Canada, and teacher-developed examinations. While there was commitment on the Task Force's part to monitor change and assess outcomes, knowledge of how to do this was limited and there was some anxiety around the collection and potential misuse of data. Even when the effective schools questionnaire for teachers was offered to schools, several telephone calls were received by the researcher from principals anxious about who, other than the researcher, might see the results. The researcher and Task Force superintendent attended several principals' meetings over the course of the Project where they explained the importance of data collection for school self-evaluation. Nonetheless, it was difficult, in some cases, to reassure people that results would not 'get into the wrong hands'. Most of the principals in the more effective schools, as perceived by their staff, were more open to evaluation and to receiving feedback from their community, exemplified by the two case profile schools, and two vignette schools, A. J. Marshall and Vernon Heights. The threat to participants posed by school self-evaluation efforts has been demonstrated elsewhere (Clift et al., 1987).

Hopkins (1987) cautions:

> *". . . when school evaluation is conceptualized within an accountability framework it produces little evidence of school improvement and indeed tends to inhibit it"* (p. 193).

This was a dilemma within the Effective Schools Project. Some years previously, Halton had a system of school inspections similar to those in many British Local Education Authorities, but had abandoned it for the very reason articulated by Hopkins. It was replaced by a Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation process for teacher supervision, and Manager's Letters between principals and their superintendents. In the latter, the principal would outline their annual goals for the school, to be negotiated with the superintendent who would then carry out a mid-year and end-of-year check to see whether the goals had been achieved. Depending on how frequently the superintendent visited the school during the year, he or she would have a more or less detailed understanding of what went on. Implementation of a goal, however, was equated with success.

Thus, while Ontario had rejected the American system of standardised testing and Halton had also rejected inspections as a means of monitoring school effectiveness, the system had not replaced these with other methods that would inform them or schools how they were doing. Although they used a few local assessments, Ministry reviews and international assessments, this information did not cover the breadth of Halton's goals for students (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, Halton's own curriculum-based mathematics assessment was changed annually to reflect the changing nature of the curriculum. While this, in itself, was a strength, it made comparability over time difficult.

The system was unwilling to give up the few measures it used, despite the questionable validity of some, until better alternatives could be offered. Given this was unfamiliar and sensitive territory for the Task Force, progress was slow. The first three years of the Project only produced preliminary investigations into the feasibility of a school profile. Once the Task Force superintendent moved to central office in year four, however, he assumed the brief for assessment and evaluation. It was then that more emphasis began to be placed on this area (see Chapter 6). Two years later - six years after the start of the Project - and as this thesis is being written, Halton has recently passed a new assessment policy that distinguishes between accountability and development and the secondary profile is nearing completion. Although a full set of indicators has not yet

been identified, work is underway to access longitudinal data on student attendance to supplement that already obtained for school dropouts, and secondary students completed, for the first time in April 1992, the effective schools questionnaire. As several items were taken from an earlier province-wide student attitude survey (King, 1986, see A. J. Marshall and Vernon Heights vignettes), some attitude changes over time can be examined. A self-concept instrument for elementary students from grades 3 to 8 has also been piloted and will be administered throughout the system in late 1992. Thus, student outcome data, an early goal of the Task Force, is becoming available for the affect areas, neglected particularly in much of the North American school effectiveness research. In some cases, longitudinal data will allow an examination of change. In other instances, this will become baseline data against which to measure progress.

Student outcome measures were not clearly defined at the beginning of the Project and, at this stage, achievement indicators have not yet been identified, although Halton's policy includes the development and implementation by 1993 of local curriculum reviews that incorporate student performance measures. This provides the potential for subsequent measurement of student outcomes. Three key questions emerge out of this discussion on the measurement of change:

- Can it be assumed that any change in attendance, dropout rate or student attitudes is related to the Effective Schools Project?
- Is it appropriate for a system to identify student outcomes as a demonstration of such a Project's impact?
- What are the most appropriate indicators of success for such a Project?

As discussed in Chapter 2, causality is extremely difficult to infer. Louis and Miles (1990) point out that school performance may result from more than school effectiveness activities within a school. Other concurrent projects might account for achievement gains. Similarly, at system level any one of many innovations might impact student outcomes. Equally, they might have more effect on teachers who, as a result, change their classroom behaviour, which impacts student outcomes. This seems a more likely scenario. While evidence of improvement in student outcomes is essential, three points must be borne in mind. First, these outcomes should be of a more comprehensive kind than those used to measure the success of many previous improvement efforts. They need to incorporate higher-level skills appropriate to today's world and indicators of social

development. Second, 'quick fixes' will not work. It is inappropriate to measure change in student outcomes throughout the system until the change effort has had time to take effect. This may take several years. Third, it may still be difficult to prove that any increases in student performance were due to such a project. Indirectly, of course, it is to be hoped that students will ultimately benefit from greater teacher involvement in decision-making and from school growth planning, although other projects have demonstrated the difficulty of attributing improvements to such efforts because it is hard to distinguish effects of one initiative from another (Dawson, 1985). The evaluation report of a similar effort in Dade County Public Schools in Florida notes:

> *". . . the impact of many of the innovations . . . is not adequately assessed by standardized achievement tests. It would behoove anyone involved in the assessment or management of such innovative programs to encourage and monitor the development of assessment techniques more attuned to these sorts of innovations and, when available, apply them to their assessment"* (Collins and Hanson, 1991, p. ii).

What, then, might be the focus of such assessment techniques? It would seem that if this Project attempted to integrate school effectiveness findings with school improvement strategies, it is logical to measure change through an examination of school effectiveness characteristics as they relate to the schools and to evaluate the progress and attainment of various process strategies, in particular the school growth plan. The teacher questionnaire has enabled the system both to examine various indicators related to the characteristics of effectiveness and teachers' attitudes to growth planning. Further evidence was provided by interviews in various schools, two of which formed case profiles in this research.

A difficulty of the research is the inability to say what change there was in Halton's teachers' attitudes. However, given the developmental nature of the Project and the early emphasis on process rather than its measurement, this was inevitable. It would have been impossible to ask questions before these particular issues had been articulated. Results, however, do suggest that the elementary teachers' attitudes were for the most part positive, while the secondary teachers, though less positive, still believed in the importance of most of the Project changes. It is the district's intention to repeat the questionnaire after three years to examine changes.

The strategic plan and reorganisation of support staff could also be seen as outcomes of this Project. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is often difficult to distinguish between processes and outcomes, which is why teachers and schools often view successful implementation as an outcome. It may be helpful to think of intermediate outcomes, for example teacher attitudes and institutional change, as process indicators because this suggests that outcomes exist that are more final: namely, student outcomes. Nonetheless, process indicators are valuable and need to be included in the evaluation of any change effort. If process indicators are seen as valid, the problem of chronology disappears because process indicators become part of ongoing monitoring efforts to refine project goals. This also links in with the concept of evolutionary development that promotes ongoing monitoring and refinement of goals. Indeed, as this thesis is being written, the senior administration is collecting information which will lead to further amendments to support staff organisation, because it has become clear in the two years since reorganisation that schools could be better serviced. Multiple measures of effectiveness have also been recommended elsewhere (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Within the schools, self-evaluation was a foreign concept for many, even after three years. As results of an implementation profile survey in June 1991 demonstrated, schools were more comfortable with planning and implementation than assessment and, particularly, evaluation (Fink and Stoll, 1992). The teacher questionnaire results provided further confirmation, as did the case profiles. By 1991, a significant number of teachers were not aware or did not believe that their school growth plan included ways to evaluate successful goal achievement, and some also did not feel that school goals were regularly reviewed by the staff. The rapidly increasing interest over the last two years, however, in assessment and evaluation suggests that as schools become more comfortable with the school growth planning process, and feel more responsible for school improvement in their own schools, there is a greater desire to know how they are doing and to be personally accountable (Stoll and Fink, 1992b). This has coincided with a planned increase in assessment at system level. Fullan (1991b) concurs:

> *"We agree that more quantitative indicators of teacher and student progress should be incorporated earlier, although we caution that if done prematurely, prescriptively or independent of a spirit of inquiry it will actually inhibit rather than stimulate further development. As much as possible people within the project must be committed to seeking measures of impact"* (p. 17).

Perhaps it is not so much that teachers view assessment of the effectiveness of implementation as a distraction (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). Rather, while they go through the 'implementation dip' common to all change efforts (Fullan, 1992a), they are afraid to measure what might look like failure. Thus, while a few schools have sought, from the start of the Project, to evaluate their goal achievement, for many this is just beginning, and they require significant support. It would appear that assessment and evaluation would be a crucial future strategic direction, and that Fullan et al.'s (1990) model of classroom improvement should be expanded to include an assessment cog, because assessment, curriculum and instruction are intertwined, and are closely linked to school improvement. As Holly and Southworth (1989) conclude:

"Evaluation . . . underscores the Developing School" (p. 88).

It is reasonable to assume that if a school goal is oriented towards incorporation of computers across the curriculum, indicators of success should be demonstrable in students' attitudes towards, usage of and performance on computers. Indeed, some schools have already demonstrated outcome gains. For example, one secondary school raised attendance and course completion rates for students in general level courses from 75 to 90 per cent, and in an elementary school local mathematics assessment results for students in grades 4 to 7 have steadily improved over the last three years, and are now well above average. School growth plans, however, which encourage schools to focus on goals that are unique to each school, make it difficult to determine system-wide change.

Halton is thus now clearly aware of the crucial role of evaluation although it has been a slow process. This Project has suggested that empowerment and accountability are compatible (Glickman, 1990). However, before a system gets heavily involved in accountability activities, school staffs must be empowered through effective processes and support to control the nature and extent of change in their building. This approach builds confidence, risk-taking and openness to accountability practices (Stoll and Fink, 1992b).

In the following section, many of the themes already discussed resurface in a discussion of the multidimensionality of the change process as it relates to the Effective Schools Project.

The Multidimensionality of Change

An examination of the Effective Schools Project from its inception in September 1986 until June 1991 has revealed some insights about the change process. Most are consistent with the findings of other researchers (House, 1981; Fullan, 1982, 1985, 1991a; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992).

The Project illustrated that in this Canadian school district all three perspectives on change operated: technological, political and cultural (House, 1981). Thus, it would appear to be naive to suggest that change is merely a matter of learning new skills and behaviours. The context of change has a strong influence on its substance. What were some examples of the three views of change? On the surface, from a purely technological viewpoint, the schools had to learn about school effectiveness, school growth planning, process skills and a variety of instructional strategies. For this, they required support. They also, however, needed understanding that people approach change in different ways. Organisational structures within schools had to be amended to support growth planning, for example rules regarding decision-making (see case profiles in Appendix D). This attention to process highlights change's political perspective. Further evidence of this was seen at system level where negotiations and compromise could be seen in senior administration's dealings with trustees, support staff, principals' and teachers' associations and among its own members. Perhaps most pervasive, however, was the aura of culture that pervaded the entire system and schools. Given that each school was unique, with its own context and set of values and norms, it would not have been possible to impose a blueprint of effective schools on them. Each school had to make its own meaning out of the information and to use it in its own specific way as part of its unique planning process. The same would be true of the schools' approach to the fundamental conditions.

There were many aids to change in this Project and some hindrances. These are outlined below with supporting research in parentheses where relevant. Only those not discussed elsewhere in this chapter will be examined in more detail.

Aids to Change

- Leadership development (Fullan, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1989).

- Staff development - training, mentoring and coaching (Joyce et al., 1983; Wideen and Andrews, 1987; Fullan, 1991a).

- Assistance to schools - instructional follow-up, facilitation and assessment data (Lezotte, 1989b; Louis and Miles, 1990; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Harrison, et al., 1989).

- Money for projects (Lezotte, 1989b; Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan and Miles, 1992).

- A focus on culture and fundamental conditions of growth planning (Deal and Kennedy, 1983; Hargreaves, 1989; Nias et al., 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992).

- A link between existing and new aspects of the culture (Holly and Southworth, 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

- Creation of interconnections between innovations (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992; Ainscow and Hopkins, 1992).

- Flexibility for schools to pursue their own areas of interest within a framework (Fullan, 1982, 1991a; Goodlad, 1984; Lezotte, 1989b), and to adapt ideas to their own context and needs (Ainscow and Hopkins, 1992).

- An emphasis on understanding the change process (Fullan, 1982, 1991a; Loucks-Horsley and Stiegelbauer, 1991). This had been a feature of staff development efforts prior to the Project, but assumed greater importance and relevance during the Project. It is now incorporated in all leadership training and instructional institutes. Understanding of people's reaction to change (Loucks and Hall, 1979; Huberman, 1988; Krupp, 1989) is a key component.

- A blend of instructional (Smith and Andrews, 1989) and transformational (Sergiovanni, 1990; Leithwood, 1992; Fullan, 1992b) leadership.

- A focus on instruction (Fullan, 1985; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Fullan et al., 1990; Bamburg and Medina, 1991).

- Trials in a small number of schools and later spread to other schools. This gave these schools the chance to try out ideas and develop school growth planning through its use (Fullan, 1985).

- A continuation of focus on particular themes, in this case school effectiveness and, from it, school growth planning. This inhibited skepticism that 'this is just another craze that will soon pass over' (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Fullan and Miles, 1992).

- Development of policy to endorse and support school growth planning. This is related to the point above, and demonstrated the commitment of the district to this initiative (Huberman and Miles, 1984; Corbett et al., 1984).

- A history of collaboration in the district between administration, principals' associations and teachers' associations.

Hindrances to Change

- The mobility of administrators and teachers (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman and Miles, 1984; Mortimore et al., 1988). Some districts have been accused of moving principals around with little warning or consultation (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). While considerable thought was devoted to principal and vice principal moves, these occurred quite frequently and tended to disrupt the momentum of the school growth planning process. In some instances, once a principal had left a school it was unclear whether the plan had been the entire staff's or only that of the principal.

  Teacher mobility also impacted the process in terms of commitment to goals and a school's mission. As the principal of Red Maple noted, after considerable staff turnover, it was necessary to reexamine their philosophy statement.

- The difficulty of sustaining commitment. In some ways this is related to the previous point in that new staff may not be committed to particular goals and, in sufficient numbers, may influence other staff members. The issue, however, is larger than this. As Fullan (1991a) comments:

> *"The problem of continuation is endemic to all new programs irrespective of whether they arise from external initiative or are internally developed"* (p. 89).

Continuation required ongoing problem-solving at all levels of the system, negotiation, support for schools, communication, and sharing of new knowledge.

- Political pressures, at the macro- and micro-levels (Ball, 1987; Sarason, 1990).

- Insufficient involvement of support staff in the early stages of the Project.

- Delayed timing of certain areas of support, for example the School Growth Plan Team training, and the effective schools questionnaire.

- Insufficient people to support assessment and evaluation in more than 80 schools.

- Lack of a well-planned system assessment process. While this may not have hindered change, it inhibited full measurement.

In addition to these aids and hindrances, the Effective Schools Project confirmed other findings in previous studies of change (see citations at beginning of this section). The Project initiators reached a greater level of understanding and achieved more success in some than in others.

Increased Theoretical Understanding About Change

- Change always took longer than expected. In this Project, some small elementary schools introduced the entire school growth planning process, including fundamental conditions, within two to three years. In large secondary schools it often took in excess of five years. At system level, change was ongoing even after the completion of the research.

- 'Top-down, bottom-up' change engendered more commitment and continuation than either an autocratic, centralised approach or a laissez-faire decentralised approach. Schools need to be given the responsibility for the management of change, while the system provides its framework.

- Development was evolutionary. It was not beneficial to lay down precise plans at system or school level. Rather, it was important to get started and to make constant amendments where necessary. This required people to 'trust the process'.

- Change was approached differently by each school. Innovations were modified to suit the school's context and culture.

- Change was a personal experience. It was necessary to recognise and attend to individuals' concerns. These often did not emerge until implementation was underway and change developed personal meaning for those involved. Stress and anxiety were common early emotions.

- Change required an enormous amount of support and encouragement. Occasionally this was in the form of money, but more important were assistance, training in new skills, and follow-up help.

- The teacher as learner was at the heart of the change process. Without teachers' engagement and commitment little improvement occurred.

Conclusion

Thus far, the researcher has examined the themes that emerged in the research. In Chapter 11, the implications of the Project and all of its themes for the linkage of school effectiveness and school improvement will be discussed.

CHAPTER 11

A Theoretical Model That Links School Effectiveness and School Improvement

Clearly, what started out as an attempt by a Canadian school district to improve school quality through the implementation of school effectiveness research findings evolved into the blending of the content of the school effectiveness knowledge base and other facets of this research with the processes of school improvement and planned change.

On the basis of earlier discussion and Project findings, in this chapter the implications for the link between school effectiveness and school improvement will be explored. The section is divided into three sections. In the first, some background questions are considered. In the second, a theoretical model that links school effectiveness and school improvement is offered, based on these research findings. The implications of the link between school effectiveness and school improvement for current educational reform efforts is analysed in the third section.

Questions Concerning the Link Between School Effectiveness and School Improvement

Three questions are now posed and discussed.

1. How Can School Effectiveness Research be Made Accessible to Educators?

One of the reasons for the limited use of research results by educators may be the traditional inaccessibility of researchers (Stoll and Fink, 1988). Both in the written and spoken word, many researchers 'turned teachers off' with their use of complex language to explain relatively simple phenomena. For this reason, many educators may have become attracted to ideas such as the five-factor theory of effectiveness, notably developed by an educator (Edmonds, 1979). Unfortunately, the five-, seven- or 12-factor theories have tended to be boiled down by educators to single sentences that denote the key thrust of each characteristic. In reality, however, the title 'purposeful leadership of the headteacher', for example, (Mortimore et al., 1988) encompassed several different facets of leadership.

Educators have little time to read books, even when they are written in accessible language. Shorter summaries of key findings would be helpful, without loss of the research findings' essence. Teachers could read these and teach them to each other using cooperative group learning techniques (Aronson et al., 1978).

Use of effective schools questionnaires is another way to bring the research findings to teachers because the indicators within them give more detail on the concepts. It is important, however, that teachers understand that such questionnaires are not blueprints for effectiveness nor to be used merely as checklists to denote what a school is or is not doing. Rather, their purpose in individual schools is as a basis for discussion and reflection regarding what is happening in schools related to what the research says happens in more effective schools, and teachers' experience within their own context.

More important is the need for researchers to work closely with schools, introduce the research findings to them in meaningful ways, and work with them in the action research mode (Stenhouse, 1979) to try out, reflect on and evaluate the findings in projects tailored to the schools' unique contexts.

2. Can the Effective Characteristics be Implemented?

Rutter et al. (1979) demonstrated that the combination of all of the characteristics of effectiveness in their study into an overall concept of 'ethos' was more powerful than the impact of any individual characteristic. This might suggest that it is necessary for a school to work on all the characteristics at one time. It is clear from this research, however, and that of other researchers (Joyce et al., 1983; Levine and Lezotte, 1990), that it is necessary to focus improvement efforts on a few key goals at one time. Furthermore, as each school is unique, it is the best judge of the time, order and way in which it will choose to implement the characteristics. Thus, the characteristics can be implemented but this implementation cannot be mandated or managed from outside. It has to be sequenced according to the schools' needs and will be interpreted by each school in a unique way. There are, however, some characteristics that appear to be fundamental conditions for a successful planning experience (see previous chapter) and many of these set the stage for later work on other characteristics.

3. Are the Effectiveness Characteristics Relevant for Schools of the 1990s?

It has been suggested that the school effectiveness characteristics might have outlived their usefulness given a changing world and its impact on education (Reynolds and Packer, 1992; Murphy, 1992). While this is an understandable argument, the Effective Schools Project experience suggests that this might not be the case. Although school effectiveness research has been criticised for its neglect of curriculum issues, this may have its benefits. Specific classroom practices and materials tend to come and go. If a longitudinal study of effectiveness were to examine specific mathematics resources or computer techniques, the chances are that by the time results were reported, years later, these methods may have been superseded by others.

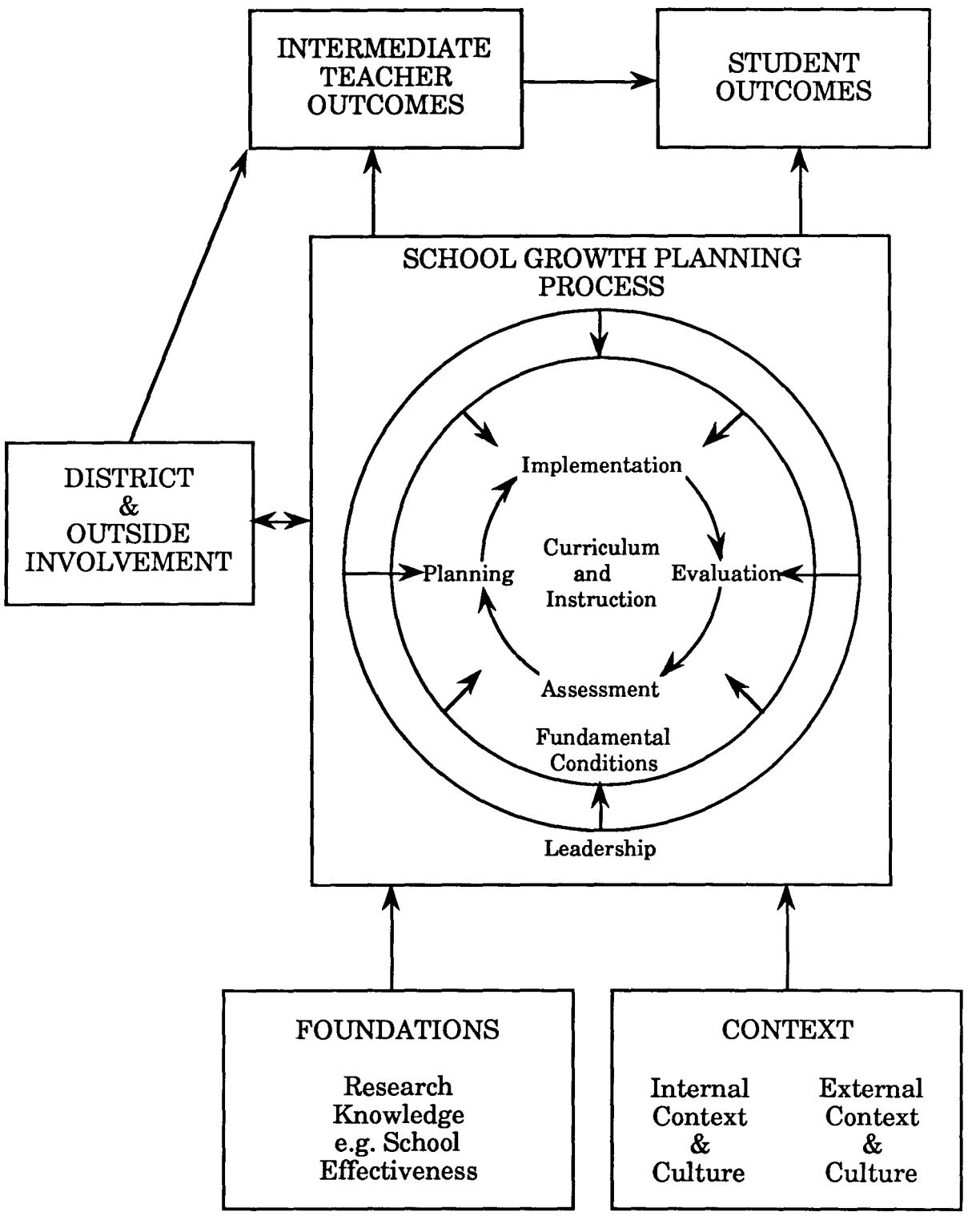
Teacher involvement, high expectations, forms of leadership, monitoring of progress, praise and recognition, however, to quote a few examples, are constants. They provide a framework within which the more changing elements of schooling can operate. In essence, they are the foundations for school growth. Although they may represent a first wave of reform (Holly, 1990), they cannot just be equated with 'doing the same but more of it' (Banathy, 1988). They are fundamental to further reform. They are the roots that enable the branches to grow (Hopkins, 1991) or their life support system. This is not to state that schools and researchers do not need to be future-oriented in the areas they choose to develop or study, but that these areas may well not grow without prior and ongoing attention to their foundations (see also, School Effectiveness, School Improvement and Restructuring).

In the previous chapter, a series of themes related to this research was examined. Some background questions have also been discussed in this chapter to understand better the nature, relevance and use of school effectiveness research. Drawing on all of these issues it is possible to offer a theoretical but practical model for the link between school effectiveness and school improvement.

A Theoretical Model of School Effectiveness and School Improvement

In Figure 5, a model that links school effectiveness and school improvement is depicted. It draws from Scheerens' (1990) integrated model of school effectiveness but extends it.

Figure 5 : A model of school effectiveness and school improvement



The theoretical concepts that underpin the model are now described.

Context

In line with contingency theory (Mintzberg, 1979), context is viewed as important to school growth. In this model, it has two facets:

1. the internal context, that includes features some of which are sometimes considered as inputs or, in research studies, intake measures: for example, the nature of the school, its student population, and current programme. It also incorporates teachers' personal experiences and a key contextual influence, the current culture;

2. the external existing context, that comprises government and district initiatives and expectations, and societal trends. These are included at the pre-planning stage because they must be considered before planning gets underway. They may, however, continue to influence planning and implementation once the process is ongoing.

Context is one initial influence on the school growth planning process. It acknowledges key differences, for example between elementary and secondary schools, and it is what makes the process unique to each school. The second part, however, is its foundations.

Foundations

While contextual understanding might provide some information on which to base school growth planning, research knowledge complements it and adds a further dimension. There are two bodies of research knowledge combined within foundations:

1. research findings on school effectiveness;

2. research findings on teacher effectiveness, to provide greater detail on successful instructional strategies.

Foundations and context together form the basis for school growth planning. Both are scanned during the assessment stage to help a school get a clear picture of its current state. Neither provides sufficient information on its own. Schools need to know what has proved successful in other places. Equally, they must be cognisant of their own particular

situation and culture of external educational initiatives and also keep an eye on society and the world of the future such that they do not prepare students for the past.

While the school and teacher effectiveness characteristics are the foundations for growth planning, they also provide a constant reference point throughout the entire process.

School Growth Planning Process

The school growth planning process is the vehicle that blends the school effectiveness research findings with school improvement process. It incorporates two outer layers, an inner cycle and a central core.

1. Leadership, the outermost layer, blends instructional and transformational styles, and is supported by an understanding and feel for the change process. While it is a characteristic associated with school effectiveness, it merits separation as it fuels the engine of school improvement.

2. Fundamental conditions, the next layer, includes vision, climate-setting, the development of collegiality and a collaborative culture, and mission. These conditions may or may not precede growth planning but they pervade it.

3. The four-stage growth planning cycle of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation.

4. A focus on curriculum and instruction: that is, the teaching-learning process. This is at the heart of the school growth plan.

Given that the school is perceived as the centre of change, this model addresses not only its external context, scanned during the assessment phase, but also the ongoing active contributing components of the district, as well as its relationship with the outside world and external agencies.

District and Outside Involvement

The school is both influenced by and reaches out and influences the district (denoted by a two-way arrow). The district influences include:

- support, through staff development, assistance, materials, research support, and money;

- monitoring and evaluation;

- politics, both at the macro- and micro-level;

- a strategic framework, for example a district strategic plan, to provide coherence to multiple innovations and support for growth planning;

- access to outside agencies: for example, in Halton's case, the Learning Consortium.

While the school growth planning process and district and outside involvement emphasise process associated with school improvement, the ultimate focus on outcomes derives from the school effectiveness tradition. There are two key sets of outcomes in this model: intermediate teacher outcomes and student outcomes.

Intermediate Teacher Outcomes

In line with a fundamental argument of this research that school development and teacher development are inextricably linked, earlier success as the result of the link between school effectiveness and school improvement should be demonstrated through teacher outcomes. Two key outcomes are outlined:

1. positive attitudes towards the existence of the effectiveness characteristics and belief in their importance;

2. identification of the characteristics of the 'teacher as learner', that include a broad and varied technical repertoire, collaboration, mutual observation and feedback, reflection, and research or inquiry.

These outcomes may be influenced by the growth planning process within the school, but also by the district's involvement and that of other external agencies. An example of this would be external staff development, although benefits accrued would increase significantly if follow-up coaching occurred within the school (Joyce and Showers, 1982).

Student Outcomes

The ultimate outcomes of the link between the two paradigms at school level should be those related to students. From knowledge gained from school effectiveness research, both in terms of its strengths and its

omissions, three components are necessary:

1. a range of outcomes, both academic and social, that measure the goals of the school;

2. an emphasis on progress, to demonstrate the 'value' added by the school;

3. a focus on equity, such that success is experienced by all groups of students.

These student outcomes may be influenced both by the schoolwide growth planning process as well as more directly by the teacher as learner.

Thus, in this model, school effectiveness and school improvement are blended closely and, indeed, complement each other's functioning. This model also links Joyce's (1991) doors to school improvement (see Chapter 1).

The model in Figure 5 is a general one. A few further comments are needed with regard to its specific relationship to the Effective Schools Project.

A closer examination of Halton's characteristics of effective schools (see Chapter 3) shows that they incorporate school and teacher effectiveness factors, and process characteristics associated with school improvement and school culture, demonstrated in the fundamental conditions. Thus, in one wheel, various aspects of the whole process are blended.

If the 12 school effectiveness characteristics are examined separately and are matched to the levels and core of the growth planning process depicted in Figure 5 and illustrated in the case profiles (see Appendices D1 and D2), an interesting phenomenon is observed. All five characteristics within the climate conducive to learning could be viewed as components of the fundamental conditions. Teacher collegiality and development and shared values and beliefs are also fundamental conditions, while leadership fuels these conditions and goals are part of the planning stage. This leaves the monitoring of progress, high expectations and the comprehensive area of instruction and curriculum which are all at the core of the instructional process. Thus, Halton's effective schools characteristics are not only the foundations for the school growth planning process, they <u>are</u> the school growth planning process. The school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms have, therefore,

been merged in Halton's school growth planning process. Therefore, while it may have appeared for two years in the middle of the research that the characteristics had disappeared, they had, indeed, taken on a more subtle and deeper role as the underpinnings for the entire growth planning process.

This model (Figure 5) addresses the features from the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms that were deemed at the end of Chapter 1 as necessary for any merger.

School Effectiveness Features

- A range of teacher and student outcomes.
- Equity, through the effectiveness characteristics and outcomes.
- Data for decision-making from the foundations and context.
- Knowledge of what is effective elsewhere, through the foundations.
- The school as the focus of change.

School Improvement Features

- A focus on process, through the school growth planning process.
- Action and ongoing development, through school growth planning and the fundamental conditions.
- School-selected priorities for development.
- A focus on curriculum and instruction.
- Staff development, both internal and external, during the planning process.
- The school as the centre of change with an external context and active involvement with the district and external agencies.

School Culture

- An understanding of the importance of school culture, through the foundations, context, leadership emphasis, fundamental conditions and staff development.

One further issue remains. Governments in several countries, including Britain, New Zealand, the United States and Canada, are currently mandating significant external educational changes. Whole systems are being 'restructured'. What, therefore, are the implications of the link between school effectiveness and school improvement for restructuring?

School Effectiveness, School Improvement and Restructuring

Certainly, in North America, restructuring has become a commonly used word with a variety of definitions that include: school choice, mandated curriculum, standardised tests and open competition among schools and districts (Boyd and Walberg, 1990; Chubb and Moe, 1990; Linn and Dunbar, 1990; Randal and Geiger, 1990); site-based management and the involvement of teachers in decision-making (Barth, 1990; Schlechty, 1990; David, 1991); and contemporary notions of child development and cognitive psychology (Murphy, 1992b; Wolf et al., 1991). In Britain, the first two sets of definitions are combined within the 1988 Education Reform Act (Maclure, 1988; Lawton, 1989b).

Following an idea described earlier that school effectiveness could be seen as a first wave, Holly (1990) views the second wave as *"the drive towards linking it* (school effectiveness) *with school improvement"* (p. 195). The third wave, however, is viewed as the restructuring and redesign of the educational system (Banathy, 1988). In Halton, by 1991 evidence was beginning to emerge within schools of 'third wave' activity as schools, in the second phase of growth planning, began to push and even alter the established structures of the system which they perceived to inhibit change in the teaching-learning process. Examples of this were: decisions by three middle schools to provide more holistic, integrated curricula; an electronic music programme in an elementary school; a schoolwide ethnocultural policy at Red Maple; and year-round schooling. None of these were part of the regular organisation of the system, and most caused the system to respond with assistance and financial support. Indeed, the Red Maple ethnocultural policy provided the leadership and example for the development of a system-wide policy.

The Halton experience suggests that first- and second-wave changes are necessary prerequisites to authentic change in the classroom. The system's role is to develop a vision and framework, provide support and encourage school-level change. McLaughlin (1990) has suggested that processes which try to coerce restructuring through policy and mandate are unlikely to succeed:

> *"We have learned that we cannot mandate what happens to effective practice; the challenge lies in understanding how policy can enable and facilitate it"* (p. 15).

This message is depressing for educators in schools, systems and countries where change has, indeed, been mandated, as it implies that reforms of such kind are doomed to failure. It would seem, however, that schools with a solid understanding and base of first- and second-wave change will be better able to cope with the demands placed by such reform efforts. The school growth planning process and, indeed, Britain's school development plan give schools a personal framework in which to examine reform demands and select priorities.

Throughout restructuring efforts or third-wave activity, therefore, if the foundations and fundamental conditions within the school for its growth are lost, the school could lose all the energy and creativity it has developed and teachers could remain in isolated classrooms. Thus, while the third wave may carry the school along, the first and, particularly, second waves must continue as undercurrents.

Conclusion

This research has studied a five-year change effort by a Canadian school district. The Effective Schools Project was set up as an attempt to link the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms.

In the previous chapter, the key issues that arose throughout the Project were examined. Out of these emerged some implications for a merger of the two traditions. These implications have been highlighted and a model offered that links the two paradigms. Finally, their relevance to current educational reform efforts has been discussed.

In conclusion, the Effective Schools Project has demonstrated that the school effectiveness and school improvement research traditions can indeed be linked, complex though the process may be. Furthermore, not only is it possible to blend them, but they are fundamental to each other

and to educational reform efforts. The task of further research remains to investigate the practicality and validity of the model that links school effectiveness and school improvement in other settings.

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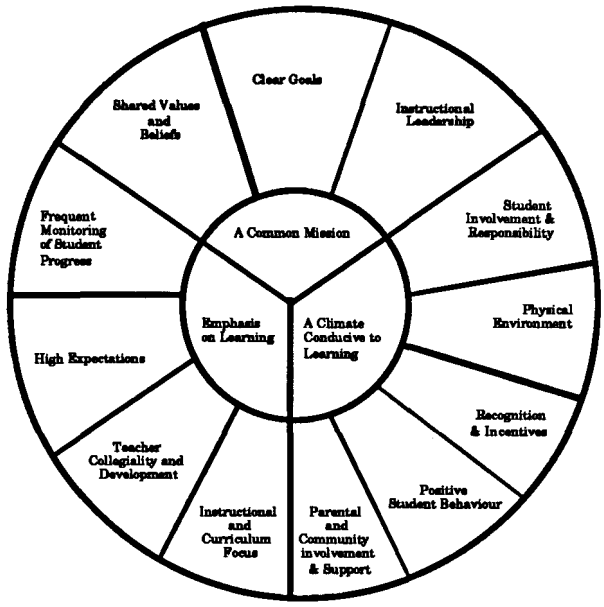
APPENDIX A1

THE HALTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS
SECONDARY (GR. 9 - OAC) TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

In effective schools, the progress, achievement and self-concept of all students is enhanced. An extensive review of research undertaken in elementary and secondary schools in a variety of school systems in North America and Britain has identified certain characteristics that are more commonly seen in effective schools. These are shown in the wheel below.



This questionnaire has been designed to help Halton schools gather information from teachers in School Growth Planning. Please complete this questionnaire, based on your experiences in this school.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The statements in the questionnaire have been developed and are grouped according to the characteristics of effective schools. For each statement, please circle two responses on the following scales:

A. First, the extent to which you agree with the statement as it reflects what is happening in our school at this time.

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Uncertain
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

B. Second, how important do you feel that this characteristic is in the creation of a more effective school?

1 = Crucial
2 = Important
3 = Fairly important
4 = Not very important
5 = Not at all important

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL					IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

A		B
	A COMMON MISSION	
1 2 3 4 5	1. This school has a clearly articulated mission (philosophy).	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	2. The staff is committed to the school's mission.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	3. The staff is committed to change, growth and improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
	SHARED VALUES & BELIEFS	
1 2 3 4 5	4. People in this school work together as a team.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	5. School events and activities reinforce school values.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	6. Staff participate in shared decision-making.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	7. High levels of trust and mutual respect exist in this school.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	8. New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	1 2 3 4 5
	CLEAR GOALS	
1 2 3 4 5	9. The school has developed a set of clearly stated goals.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	10. Planning is a collaborative process involving all staff.	1 2 3 4 5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE					
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	
A											B
1	2	3	4	5	11. Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.						1 2 3 4 5
1	2	3	4	5	12. Staff consider the school goals important.						1 2 3 4 5
1	2	3	4	5	13. Activities throughout the school (classroom, co-curricular/extra-curricular, special events) support and reinforce school goals.						1 2 3 4 5
1	2	3	4	5	14. School goals are shared with the school community.						1 2 3 4 5
1	2	3	4	5	15. School goals are regularly reviewed by the staff.						1 2 3 4 5
1	2	3	4	5	16. Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.						1 2 3 4 5

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

<u>Please note</u>: For 'The administrative team', please read principal and vice principal(s). For 'The leadership team', please read principal, vice principal(s), and heads of department.

1	2	3	4	5	17. The administrative team communicates a clear vision of where the school is going.						1 2 3 4 5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
A						B				
1	2	3	4	5	18. The administrative team communicates high expectations to teachers, students, parents and community.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	19. The administrative team is 'visible' throughout the school to both staff and students.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	20. The administrative team communicates openly and frankly with staff, students and parents.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	21. The administrative team places priority on curriculum and instructional issues.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	22. The administrative team promotes collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	23. The administrative team takes part in school-based staff development.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	24. The leadership team promotes development activities for staff.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	25. The leadership team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	26. The leadership team spends time in classrooms observing instruction.	1	2	3	4	5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
A				B						
1	2	3	4	5	27. The administrative team is knowledgeable about instructional resources.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	28. The administrative team uses the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (CS & E) process to assist in the improvement of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
					EMPHASIS ON LEARNING					
1	2	3	4	5	29. The primary purpose of this school is teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	30. Staff in this school really care about how much **all** students learn.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	31. Teachers in this school believe that **all** students can learn and be successful.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	32. Teachers in this school work with support staff (school based and external) to enhance student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
					FREQUENT MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS					
1	2	3	4	5	33. Student progress is regularly and systematically monitored and assessed.	1	2	3	4	5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
A						B				
1	2	3	4	5	34. Student progress is monitored through a variety of methods of assessment and evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	35. Teachers use assessment results to plan appropriate instruction and curriculum priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	36. Teachers communicate to students how and why evaluation methods are used.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	37. Student assessment information is used to give specific feedback to students.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	38. Formal and informal progress reports are given to parents regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
					HIGH EXPECTATIONS					
1	2	3	4	5	39. Challenging and attainable standards for achievement are set and maintained for **all** students.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	40. Achievement expectations are communicated to **all** students and parents.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	41. **All** students are treated in ways which emphasize success and potential rather than failures and shortcomings.	1	2	3	4	5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL					IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

A		B
	TEACHER COLLEGIALITY AND DEVELOPMENT	
1 2 3 4 5	42. Teachers in this school are involved in ongoing professional development experiences.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	43. Teachers in this school consistently look for ways to improve their knowledge of curriculum and instructional techniques.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	44. Staff regularly collaborate to plan curriculum and instruction.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	45. Teachers regularly share teaching skills and strategies.	1 2 3 4 5
	FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM	
1 2 3 4 5	46. Learning activities are related to learning objectives and outcomes.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	47. A wide variety of resources are used to facilitate student learning.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	48. Curriculum planning ensures that key skills are reinforced across grade levels and courses.	1 2 3 4 5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
A										B
1	2	3	4	5	49. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching skills and strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	50. Teachers use a variety of motivational techniques to promote student learning and growth.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	51. Disruptions of learning time are few.	1	2	3	4	5
					A CLIMATE CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING					
1	2	3	4	5	52. The atmosphere in this school encourages learning.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	53. A positive feeling permeates this school.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	54. Students in this school are enthusiastic about learning.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	55. Teachers like working in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
					STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY					
1	2	3	4	5	56. Students in this school are encouraged to think for themselves.	1	2	3	4	5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE					
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	
A											B
1	2	3	4	5	57. Students in this school have a say in school decisions that affect them.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	58. Students are given opportunities to take on extra jobs responsibilities in the school.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	59. Students in this school see themselves as able, responsible and valuable.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	60. There is a well organized co-curricular/extra-curricular activities program in the school.	1	2	3	4	5	
					PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1	2	3	4	5	61. The physical condition of the school is attractive, clean and well-kept.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	62. Students' work is prominently displayed.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	63. A lot of attention is given to keeping bulletin boards and other display areas attractive and up-to-date.	1	2	3	4	5	

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL					IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

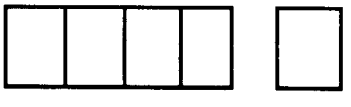
A		B
	RECOGNITION & INCENTIVES	
1 2 3 4 5	64. There are many opportunities for reward and recognition throughout the school.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	65. Programs to recognize students' achievement reflect school values.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	66. Teachers praise **all** students for their accomplishments rather than only those who accomplish the most.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	67. Teachers work to enhance students' self-concept.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	68. Successes of teachers are recognized.	1 2 3 4 5
	POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR	
1 2 3 4 5	69. The school has a clearly stated behaviour code.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	70. The school has clear, consistent rules and expectations.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	71. Staff and students work together to solve problems.	1 2 3 4 5

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE					
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	
A											B
1	2	3	4	5	72. Teachers treat students fairly and with respect.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	73. Teachers consistently treat students with understanding, caring and concern.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	74. Teachers and students work together to make rules governing behaviour in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	75. The administrative team works with teachers to resolve student discipline problems.	1	2	3	4	5	
					PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT						
1	2	3	4	5	76. People in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	77. Contact with parents and the community is frequent, using a wide variety of formal and informal methods.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	78. The school does a good job of helping parents to understand more clearly what is being taught.	1	2	3	4	5	

REFLECTS THIS SCHOOL						IMPORTANCE				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		CRUCIAL	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
A										**B**
1	2	3	4	5	79. The school encourages feedback from parents about the quality of the program.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	80. The staff encourage parents and community members to help out in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	8l. Many teachers use parent/community volunteers in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	82. The community participates in school events.	1	2	3	4	5
					SPECIAL ISSUES:					
1	2	3	4	5	83.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	84.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	85.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	86.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	87.	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any further comments you may wish to make:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!



APPENDIX A2

The Halton Board of Education (Kindergarten - Grade 8) Effective Schools Elementary Teacher Questionnaire

The elementary teacher effectiveness questionnaire is identical to the secondary questionnaire with exception of items 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 within the Instructional Leadership section.

In the secondary questionnaire, these five items describe the leadership team: that is, the principal, vice principal(s) and heads of departments. In contrast, in the elementary questionnaire all of the Instructional Leadership items, numbers 24 to 28 included, refer to the administrative team: that is, the principal and vice principal(s).

Items

24. The administrative team promotes development activities for staff.

25. The administrative team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.

26. The administrative team spends time in classrooms observing instruction.

27. The administrative team is knowledgeable about instructional resources.

28. The administrative team uses the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation (CS&E) process to assist in the improvement of instruction.

APPENDIX B

Reliability and Validity of Instrumentation

The reliability and validity of instruments had to be considered by the researcher. Reliability is defined by Thorndike (1988) as:

> *". . . how accurately the test sample represents the broader universe of responses from which it is drawn . . "* (p. 330).

Validity, Zeller (1988) explains as:

> *"A measure is valid if it does what it is intended to do. Alternatively stated, an indicator of some abstract concept is valid to the extent that it measures what it purports to measure"* (p. 322).

Creation of Instruments

In the creation of instruments, the researcher followed some general rules. She:

- worked with her client group to select key areas of focus;
- wrote down ideas for questions and discussed these with her client group;
- drafted a questionnaire or interview schedule and requested additions, deletions, amendments and comments from her client group and other appropriate sources (for example, for a parental survey, she sought out the opinions of parents). She asked particularly that people focus on clarity of language and ideas;
- redrafted the questionnaire for piloting;
- questioned respondents informally after the pilot to ascertain ease of response, clarity and content-related validity;
- examined responses to look for signs of difficulty and unreliable items; and
- amended the questionnaire for general use.

Specific attempts to examine reliability and validity are now given.

Internal Consistency

In the case of the effective schools questionnaires, the development of which is discussed in Chapter 2, Alpha Coefficients were computed to establish the internal consistency of the instruments. For ease of understanding on the part of the respondents, the 82 items had been grouped under headings that mirrored the segments of the characteristics of school effectiveness wheel (see Chapter 3 for a description of the characteristics). The coefficients were computed for both elementary and secondary questionnaires to check the internal consistency on: all of the items designed to measure the 15 sub-scales of the questionnaire (that is, the 12 outer segments and the 3 inner segments); all of the items designed to measure the three larger scales (a common mission, emphasis on learning, and climate conducive to learning); and the 82 items combined (that is, the entire questionnaire). Alpha Coefficients were also computed for both the agreement responses and those that related to importance.

It should be noted that although the items were grouped conceptually, they were not intended to be scaled, although it is possible that they might be measuring the same construct. By looking at each of the items in relation to the total and within the various subscales, it is possible to get a sense of how consistent they are with one another. Alpha Coefficients for the three larger scales and the 82 items combined are shown in Table B1.

Table B1
Alpha Coefficients for Larger Scales and Total

Scale	Agreement (A)		Importance (B)	
	Elementary Alpha =	Secondary Alpha =	Elementary Alpha =	Secondary Alpha =
A Common Mission (Q1 - Q28)	.94	93	.92	.94
Emphasis on Learning (Q29 - Q51)	.93	.90	.91	.94
Climate Conducive to Learning (Q52 - Q82)	.93	.93	.94	.95
Total (Q1 - Q82)	.97	.97	.97	.98

As Table B1 demonstrates, the Alpha Coefficients for the three larger scales and for the combined total are very high, all at .9 or above out of a maximum coefficient value of 1.0. These suggest that the questionnaire does indeed, measure 'school effectiveness in Halton' and that the subscales measure 'a common mission', 'emphasis on learning' and 'climate conducive to learning', as perceived by Halton teaching staff.

Given that the greater the number of items included, the higher the Alpha Coefficient is likely to be, it was also decided to examine the 15 smaller scales using the same analysis. Results are given in Table B2.

On the agreement scales, the Alpha Coefficients ranged from .54 to .91 on the elementary questionnaire, and from .62 to .87 on the secondary questionnaire. In the cases where the coefficient was low, there were often fewer items, but more important, there was no reason to expect that the items would be highly related. For example, the physical environment scale contained only three items two of which focused on display of work and other information. The third, however, highlighted the school's physical condition. For many elementary teachers, in particular, the latter was not viewed positively due to the age of buildings, whereas display was seen as an area under their control and was viewed more favourably. Thus, if the physical condition item were removed, the Alpha Coefficient would rise to .76. Despite, these caveats, if the researcher was developing the instrument again, she would probably relocate certain items (for example Q51 - Disruptions of learning time - which may fit more appropriately in the section on a climate conducive to learning).

Generally, the Alpha Coefficients for the agreement scales were higher for the elementary questionnaire scales, in contrast with those for the importance scales that were higher for the secondary questionnaire scales. On the importance scales, the Alpha Coefficients ranged from .57 to .86 on the elementary questionnaire, and from .72 to .89 on the secondary questionnaire.

Overall, therefore, the questionnaire can be seen as reasonably reliable, although some of the subscales are less so, when considered separately, and these ones have not, therefore, been used on their own.

Table B2
Alpha Coefficients for Fifteen Subscales

Scale	Agreement (A) Elementary Alpha =	Agreement (A) Secondary Alpha =	Importance (B) Elementary Alpha =	Importance (B) Secondary Alpha =
A Common Mission (Q1 - Q3)	.78	.74	.75	.77
Shared Values & Beliefs (Q4 - Q8)	.74	.73	.69	.74
Clear Goals (Q9 - Q16)	.82	.83	.83	.89
Instructional Leadership (Q17 - Q28)	.91	.87	.86	.84
Emphasis on Learning (Q29 - Q32)	.71	.62	.57	.72
Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress (Q33 - Q38)	.84	.75	.79	.87
High Expectations (Q39 - Q41)	.83	.74	.73	.74
Teacher Collegiality & Development (Q42 - Q45)	.79	.82	.82	.88
Focus on Curriculum & Instruction (Q46 - Q51)	.78	.72	.81	.86
A Climate Conducive to Learning (Q52 - Q55)	.86	.86	.82	.85
Student Involvement & Responsibility (Q56 - Q60)	.69	.69	.77	.78
Physical Environment (Q61 - Q63)	.54	.68	.81	.78
Recognition & Incentives (Q64 - Q68)	.84	.74	.81	.85
Positive Student Behaviour (Q69 - Q75)	.80	.80	.84	.80
Parental & Community Involvement & Support (Q76 - Q82)	.82	.82	.84	.89

Other aspects of reliability and validity are now briefly discussed with reference to the effective schools questionnaire.

Test-Retest Reliability

Within Halton, the effective schools questionnaire was designed for use in a practical setting, and was intended to promote change subsequent to the identification of needs. Test-retest reliability, therefore, would be impossible to assess in that environment. If the questionnaire was to have widespread use over time, however, it would be advisable to carry out test-retest reliability.

Content-Related Validity

With regard to the effective schools questionnaire, the relevant question to ask related to this type of validity is whether the questionnaire is valid in relation to what generally are accepted to be components of what the researcher is trying to measure. In this case, the researcher used the school effectiveness and improvement literature and her own previous research study findings as a base. The items, thus, correspond closely to the findings of many studies.

Criterion-Related Validity

The appropriate question to ask here is to what extent the effective schools instrument gives the researcher the same results as she might get from another measure. Specifically, in an examination of concurrent validity, she would need to know whether people agree that the schools demonstrated as effective by their results are the ones they would identify as effective. Through her work with many of Halton's schools and ongoing informal discussions with superintendents and district consultants who work closely with schools, the researcher is aware of the reputation of the schools. This has been borne out in the questionnaire results of individual schools.

APPENDIX C1

Halton Board of Education
School Growth Plan Evaluation Interview
(Elementary and Secondary Schools)

Background

Years teaching:
Years teaching at this school:
Department head (secondary only): Yes: No:
Member of School Growth Plan committee:
Yes - volunteer: Yes - co-opted:
No:

Part One

'I would like to begin by asking you some questions about your school's mission statement/statement of philosophy'.

1. Can you tell me about this statement or give me some key words or ideas that describe it?

   (If they give outline, ask a. and b. Otherwise go to Q2.)

   a. Do you agree with it? Yes: No:
   (Prompt: If no: Why not?)
   b. Do you think it has the support of other staff? Yes: No:
   If no: Why not?

   (Do not ask new teachers.)

2. Did you participate in its development? Yes: No:
   (Prompt: If yes: How?
   If no: Why not?)

3. Is the statement well communicated to staff, students and community?
   Yes: No:
   (Prompt: If yes: How?)

Part Two

'I would now like to ask you some general questions about your school growth plan and its goals'.

4. Do you have a copy of the School Growth Plan?
   Yes: No:

   (Do not ask new teachers.)

5. Did you participate in any way in the development of the plan?
   Yes: No:

   (If they participated, ask a. and b. If they did not, ask c. and d.)

   a. In what way did you participate?
   (Probes: Amount of time
   When
   Type of participation
   Thoughts on process)

   b. Were you satisfied with your level of involvement?
   Satisfied:
   More:
   Less:

   (For teachers who did not participate)

   c. Why didn't you participate?
   (Prompt: If appropriate: Was there any opportunity for input?)

   d. Would you have liked to have been more involved?
   Satisfied:
   More:

6. Who do you see as being the key members of staff involved in its development?

(New teachers, ask Q7; otherwise go to Q8.)

7. Have you been made aware of the school's goals?
   Yes: No:
   (Prompt: If yes: How?)
   What are they? **(Do not ask Q8.)**

8. We're going to talk about the goal areas of your school's plan. Are you aware of them?

   (Tell respondent any ones they cannot name.)

9. What do you think of these goals?
   (Probe: each area)

10. How do you think the rest of the staff view these goals?
    (Prompt: If negative answer: Why?)

11. Do you think the goals have been well communicated to students and the community?
    Yes:
    No:
    Not sure:
    (Prompt: If yes: In what ways?
    If no: How could they be better communicated?)

12. Is the progress of the School Growth Plan being monitored in any way?
    (Prompt: (If yes: How?)
    (Probe: Has this been effective?)

Part Three

"Next, I would like to focus on any goals you are directly involved with, through your department or a committee. I would like to know about the progress of these goals, the support you have received to address them, and their impact."

(Check which goals they are working on. For each relevant goal, go through the following questions:)

13. **Instruction and/or curriculum goal(s)**

Involvement

A. What are you doing for this goal?
(Probe: Stage of progress)

Impact

"In the next few questions, I'd like to know how you perceive the impact of this goal."

B. What impact, if any, has working on this goal had on your own classroom instruction?
(Probe: Behaviour
Attitude
Skills)

C. How would you describe the impact of this goal on your students?
(Prompts: Have you been successful: i.e. have the students benefitted? How?)

On reflection, are there any ways in which you might have approached the goal differently in order to make it more effective for students?

Support

"In the next group of questions, I want to learn as much as possible about the kinds of factors that are helping or hindering you in your efforts to implement this goal".

D. Have you ever sought advice or help from any of the following for this goal?
- Principal or Vice Principal(s)
- Department Head (if applicable)
- Members of Committee/
  Your Department (if applicable)
- Consultants/Coordinators

(Probe: Who? What for? How long?)
(Prompt: If yes: Were you satisfied with the assistance you received?)

E. Do you feel you have adequate resources to implement this goal?
   a. Material Yes: No:
   b. Time Yes: No:
   (Prompts: <u>If no</u>: What do you need?
   Have you spoken to anyone about it?
   Is anything being done to get them?)

F. Have you attended any in-service related to this goal?
   Yes: No:
   (Prompt: <u>If yes:</u> What?
   Did you find it useful?)

<u>Evaluation</u>

"I'd like to focus briefly on evaluation."

G. How have you evaluated the progress of this goal?

14. **Climate and/or Community Goals**

<u>Involvement</u>

A. What are you doing for this goal?
   (Probe: Stage of progress)

<u>Impact</u>

"In the next few questions, I'd like to know how you perceive the impact of this goal."

A. Up to this point, do you feel that this goal has been a success?
   Yes: No:
   (Prompt: <u>If yes</u>: Why?
   <u>If no</u>: Why not?)

B. Has working on this goal had any particular impact on you?
   (Probe: Behaviour
   Attitude
   Skills)

C. Have you noticed any particular impact on the students?

"In the next group of questions, I want to learn as much as possible about the kinds of factors that are helping or hindering you in your efforts to implement this goal".

D. Have you ever sought advice or help from any of the following for this goal?
- Principal or Vice Principal(s)
- Department Head (if applicable)
- Members of Committee/ Your Department (if applicable)
- Consultants/Coordinators

(Probe: Who? What for? How long?)
(Prompt: If yes: Were you satisfied with the assistance you received?)

E. Do you feel you have adequate material resources to implement this goal?
a. Material Yes: No:
b. Time Yes: No:

F. Have you attended any in-service related to this goal?
Yes: No:
(Prompt: If yes: what?
Did you find it useful?)

Evaluation

"I'd like to focus briefly on evaluation."

G. How have you evaluated the progress of this goal?

Part Four

"I would like to know whether you feel your mission statement/statement of philosophy and goals relate to the characteristics of effectiveness on this wheel."

15. Have you seen this before? (Show characteristics wheel.)
Yes: No:
(Prompt: If no, briefly explain:)

'These characteristics have been shown in research to lead to improvements in student progress, achievement and non-academic development."

(<u>If yes</u>: Ask Q16. Otherwise go to Part Five.)

16. Do you see any relationship between your plan and this wheel?
(Prompt: <u>If yes</u>: What?)

Part Five

'Finally, I would like to ask you some general questions about any changes you have noticed at this school and how you feel about the school.

<u>(Only ask if on staff for 3 or more years. New staff, go to Q19</u>.)

17. What changes have you noticed here, if any, over the last 3 years?
(Probe for each: When did you notice these changes? - key events, turning points?)
Which people have been influential in these changes (if appropriate)?
    - Staff
    - Students
    - Community Relations
    - School Climate
    - Curriculum and Instruction

18. What, if anything, are you personally doing differently (than you were doing 3 years ago)?

<u>All Teachers</u>:

19.* To what extent are you involved in decision-making?
(Probe: Has this always been the way?)

20. Would you say there is a sense of shared purpose in this school?
(Prompt: <u>If yes</u>: administrators' role in enhancing this)
(Probe: Has this always been the way?)

21.* How would you describe staff development as it relates to this school?
(Probe: Is it more related to people's individual needs, to school needs, or a mixture of both?)

22a. What would you say are your principal's key strengths?

22b.* Do the principal and vice principal(s) work as a team?

23.* What is important in this school?

24. In brief, what are the strengths of your school?

25. What are the areas in which your school could improve?

26.* What does School Growth Planning mean to you?
(Probe: Why are you doing it?
Strengths?
Difficulties?)

27 Will your School Growth Plan make it a more effective school?
(Probe: Why? Why not?
How will you know?
How can you measure it?)

28.* How do you feel about this school?
(Probe: Why?
Have you worked in others? Comparison)

29.* What do you see as your role in this school (as it relates to other teachers)?

30. If you could summarize your school today in a few key words, what would you say?

THANK YOU!

***New items for elementary case profile interviews.**

APPENDIX C2

Halton Board of Education
School Growth Plan
Elementary and Secondary Principal's Interview

Background:

a. School:
b. How long have you been principal here?
c. How many other schools have you been principal of?
d. Years as principal:
f. Years as vice principal:

First Actions/Prerequisites:

1. Can you tell me about the school when you first arrived:
   - size
   - culture
   - instructional focus
   - communication
   - collaboration
   - shared values
   - community
   - staff - length of stay

2. Was there any form of planning when you arrived?
   Yes: No:

3. What was the first thing you did? e.g. curriculum, staffing, physical plant:
   - impact
   - on reflection was this the right thing to do?

4. How long was it before you made any significant changes?

5. What did you do?

   (Probe: philosophy, mission)
   - when?
   - process of development - satisfaction with process

- involvement of teachers - process and subsequent communication
- do you still believe in it?
- is there any way in which you would change it?
- benefits of having a philosophy /mission statement
- impact noticed

School Goals/Plan

- how did they come about?
- when?
- process of development - satisfaction with process
- involvement of teachers - process and subsequent communication
- evolution
- are there any changes you would make?
- benefits of having goals - impact noticed
- how are you monitoring your plan?

6. Which do you think should come first - the philosophy/mission statement or the planning process and goals?

   (Probe: Why? Is that the way it happened in your school?)

7. What impact have any of the following had on this process:
   - Effective Schools Task Force?
   - Halton's Strategic Directions?
   - LEAP?
   - other?

8a. What impact have administrator and staff changes had on the process and on the school?
   - principal
   - vice principal
   - staff

8b. How can you reduce any negative effects?

Change/Culture

9a. What changes have occurred (you noticed) at _____ over the last three years?

- staff
- students
- school climate
- community relations
- curriculum and instruction
- instructional consultants

9b. How many of the above can be attributed to the work you have already described?

10. Would you say there is a sense of shared purpose in the school?
Yes: No:

11. Do staff participate in decision-making?
Yes: No:

- When is it appropriate for them to participate and when is it inappropriate? Are there any decisions you make alone?
- What about accountability for decisions made?

12. What are the forces that work for and against the promotion of a more collaborative work culture in your school?

13a. Do you think you are more successful now as a change agent than you were three years ago?

(Probe: Why/why not?)

13b. What, if anything, has hindered you from being more successful as a change agent?

General

14. In brief, what are the strengths of your school?

15. What are the areas in which your school could improve?

16. Will your plan make your school more effective?
(Prompt: Why/Why not?)

17. What is your key strength as a principal?

18. If you could summarize your school today in a few key words, what would you say?

19. If you had your time again, would you do anything differently?

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX D 1

Case Profile - Burgundy Public School

Burgundy, a kindergarten to grade 8 school (5 to 14 years old) is located in the east end of Burlington. In 1989, 41 teachers worked with 660 students in 25 classes, with three classes in each of the youngest and oldest years and two classes each in grades 4, 5 and 6. There were also two classes of learning disabled and trainable mentally retarded students. Nine instructional assistants were employed to help with these students. Twenty per cent of the teaching staff had less than five years' experience in teaching, 25 per cent between five and 10 years, almost a third between 11 and 20 years, and the remainder more than 20 years.

Burgundy's catchment area contained both private homes and subsidised housing. Most families had two incomes, although there were a significant number of single-parent families. There were few ethnic minority students at the school.

The arrival of a new principal and vice principal in September 1989 heralded significant change for the school. The principal, an original member of the Task Force in her role as special education coordinator, articulated 10 beliefs and values she saw as the foundations of her role:

1. **All students can learn.**
2. **Students learn most effectively when they have positive self-esteem and when they are viewed as a 'whole person': that is, social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs should be addressed.**
3. **The school is a community of life-long learners; a partnership between students, teachers and parents. Working together strengthens.**
4. **Teachers need recognition and support to grow professionally and personally.**
5. **Schools work best when teachers are involved in decision-making and programme planning. Commitment and responsibility will develop or be enhanced.**
6. **Schools should be safe and inviting.**
7. **All schools can get better: that is, helping children to learn more effectively and to feel better about themselves.**
8. **Staff development is a key to success but it must match the needs of the school.**

9. **Understanding change is essential. Know it is inevitable and recognize the characteristics of the change process (help maintain sanity!).**
10. **The principal is an instructional leader.**

From the April before their arrival until October, she and the vice principal interviewed teachers, support and office staff, parents, superintendents, community members, trustees and even the road crossing guard on the strengths and needs of the school. Through her interviews and early months of observation, the principal gained insights into the school and its culture before trying to change it, an idea promoted by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991). She learned that the community were supportive of the school, although not very involved. She felt that many good activities occurred in classrooms, but did not perceive the instructional programme or its improvement to be a major focus. She noticed some cooperation among staff, although this did not seem to be an expectation. It also appeared to her that the previous principal had not involved teachers in decision-making, and was rarely seen around the school.

The interview information was fed back to the staff, categorised according to Halton's effective schools characteristics, and provided information for subsequent decision-making.

When Burgundy's principal was appointed, several staff left the school, some, she gathered because she was female and had a strong commitment to special education. She was, thus, able to hire nine staff members, including two brand new teachers. Through involving existing staff in this process, and working with them to develop questions and interview, they began to get to know each other's values and styles. She believed that more commitment to new colleagues resulted.

In her perception, over the first few months many activities and changes occurred simultaneously:

> *". . . likely appearing without specific purpose to staff. However, everything I did was based on my values and beliefs and the type of school I believed was best for kids. These activities set the stage for developing our vision and growth plan later in the school year."*

The activities paralleled many of the themes described in the research literature, the effective schools questionnaire and the prerequisites for growth planning outlined in Chapter 5. These themes are now discussed,

with an initial focus on events over the first few months, followed by an examination of the subsequent changes and activities that resulted from 'setting the stage'. Many of the themes merge into each other.

Climate Setting

The principal engaged in various activities to build a climate in which growth planning might be sustained. Five key aspects of climate-setting were: attention to the physical environment; parental involvement; student involvement; increased teacher involvement in decision-making; and amendments to organisational structures.

The Physical Environment

Immediately, the principal changed her office. She moved her desk into a corner, carpeted the floor, added a round table for meetings, put photographs, artwork and children's stories on the wall, and left her door open. Staff washrooms were painted *("a small but noticeable change")*, bulletin boards were put up in the hallways, as was a welcoming message board, and a new school sign. Plants were placed in the entrance and main office, which was subsequently redecorated:

> *"We made them feel . . . we value them because we put . . . money into changing the office to make it better for them, and it will be more efficient and therefore they're more effective."*

A camera was purchased to *"catch kids doing good things"*. A comfortable seating area was added in the staffroom, and a table tennis table removed and hidden. This, noted the principal, was *"a big mistake"*. Her first impression of the table was negative, denoting a lack of work during planning time. In retrospect, she saw it as a symbol of togetherness, rarely used. After two months, the table reappeared, in the principal's office, put there by teachers as a joke. This demonstrated a change of atmosphere, even within a short period. The principal commented:

> *"I knew by that time that . . . my interpretation was really incorrect, so it went back in* (to the staffroom) *and everybody laughed. They folded it up and . . . didn't use it very often."*

The school's physical environment appears to send a message to the teachers, whether welcoming or disinviting. Attention to the

environmentis, therefore, an important way that a principal can demonstrate to people that they matter.

Parental Involvement and Support

The results of the entry interviews were shared with parents, and improvements also immediately made to the parents' newsletter.
All activities and issues were communicated to parents *"to build trust"*. This proved significant when the school had to be closed the following summer due to asbestos. As a result of a letter sent to parents, only positive comments were received. One parent remarked informally:

> *"If anything went wrong, I would be the first parent to complain! But her letter was so well written, I didn't even feel I needed to call her."*

Programme and open nights were increased, as were musical productions and open assemblies. A Festival of the Lights concert replaced the traditional Christmas concert, to acknowledge and respect diversity. The principal and vice principals (in September 1990, the school was assigned another vice principal who had half-time teaching duties) also worked with the Parent Group to hold a 'mini-conference' on a Saturday on 'Families in the '90s', attended by 120 people. Photos of the Parent Group and their events are now permanent exhibits in the hallways.

In response to the effective schools questionnaire, all items related to parental and community involvement and support were rated more positively by Burgundy teachers than by the system sample (see Chapter 7). In particular, 88 per cent of the Burgundy staff, compared with 71 per cent of the system sample, felt their school encouraged feedback from parents about the programme's quality, and almost all (91%) felt teachers used and should use parent and community volunteers in the classroom, compared with 78 per cent of the system sample.

In terms of the growth plan itself, by 1991 more Burgundy teachers felt that parents and community members had input into the process (70% versus 48% of the system sample), that they should have input (73% versus 60% of the system sample), and that goals were shared with the school community (91% versus 75% of the system sample). Although a quarter still did not feel it very important for parents to give input into the planning process, the trust built with parents at this school and their greater involvement in classrooms and school life indicate a move in the

direction of breaking down barriers and power relationships (see Chapter 10 for further discussion).

The parents themselves appeared generally satisfied with their involvement level. The majority (89%) felt the school made frequent formal contact with them. Fewer believed that the school encouraged their feedback about the programme's quality (71%) or requested their input into the planning process (69%). A number of parents, however were uncertain whether feedback or input were sought (15% and 21% respectively). The parents who commented on these issues and on communication felt that the school kept them informed and welcomed their input:

> *"Parents are openly and honestly given information regarding problems, concerns and the planning process of the school."*
>
> *"Parents are regularly asked for their input opinions regarding the running of the school."*

Although student involvement is not the same issue at elementary school as at secondary school because of some of the children's ages, it is an important feature of climate-setting.

Student Involvement

According to the principal's beliefs and aims of the growth plan, the school desired greater student involvement in their own learning and decision-making. One teacher defined empowerment as:

> *". . . the administration empowering the teachers and the teachers empowering the students . . . and not necessarily have a hierarchical thing . . . it's more of a cooperative thing . . that really is the way of the future."*

To what extent was this achieved? Certainly, cooperative group learning as a strategy has been demonstrated to promote greater student involvement through its emphasis on individual accountability (Johnson et al., 1984). Throughout the teacher interviews, however, although there was much talk of student excitement and enjoyment of activities, an emphasis on greater responsibility was not mentioned. The questionnaire results in June 1991 reiterated this finding. Burgundy teachers rated students as being less involved in decision-making, problem-solving and thinking for themselves than did teachers in Halton generally (see Table D1-1).

Table D1-1
Student involvement - a comparison between Burgundy and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Burgundy (N=33)	Halton (N=288)
Students in this school are encouraged to think for themselves.	76	87
Students in this school have a say in school decisions that affect them.	36	51
Staff and students work together to solve problems.	67	80

At this time, Burgundy teachers also felt it less important than their Halton colleagues that students have input into decisions that affected them (Burgundy=58%, Halton=68%). As a result of these findings, a staff meeting was held to discuss student involvement, particularly in decision-making.

Chapter 10 examines the issue of student involvement and power relationships in more detail.

Decision-Making

Fullan (1982) reflects that shared decision-making builds the individual meaning and school commitment necessary for success. When the principal arrived at the school, she perceived little teacher contribution to decision-making. Indeed, she felt her predecessor did not even give her a lot of information *"so it made it really hard to get a handle on what was really going on"*. Her invitation to teachers to help select new staff members was an early example that she would make changes, in line with her beliefs outlined earlier.

The behaviour policy's development in 1990 was one area where teachers became involved in decision-making. It proved a learning experience for the vice principal who chaired a committee that designed the policy. He regularly brought the group's revisions to staff meetings for input from other teachers which, according to the principal, was seldom given. When the policy was printed, distributed and ready to be implemented, however, people began to ask how they should respond to various situations. The vice principal was frustrated that people had not raised

these issues earlier, but, pointed out the principal, *"people don't respond until it directly involves them . . . something concrete".*

When the effective schools questionnaire was completed in 1991, it was clear that the issue had not been satisfactorily resolved. Compared with their colleagues throughout Halton, considerably fewer Burgundy teachers were satisfied with their school's behaviour policy or expectations. (see Table D1-2).

Table D1-2
Positive student behaviour — a comparison between Burgundy and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Burgundy (N=33)	**Halton (N=288)**
The school has a clearly-stated behaviour code.	61	83
The school has clear, consistent rules and expectations.	55	79
The administrative team works with teachers to resolve student discipline problems.	78	88

As a result of these findings, the issue was brought back to another staff meeting. The principal asked the school's guidance counsellor to facilitate the meeting, where she modelled a technique she used in classrooms. Teachers sat in a circle, developed questions and discussed behaviour management strategies. In the principal's opinion, this meeting was successful. The completion of the research, however, prevented access to staff opinion.

While teachers were encouraged to become more involved in decision-making, there were still expectations around certain issues, for example, the principal's decision to incorporate cooperative group learning as a school-wide instructional strategy, although there was flexibility regarding each teacher's level of involvement.

Generally, teachers felt they were consulted and had the opportunity to voice their opinions. By 1991, however, they still did not feel totally involved in decision-making. Only two-thirds (67%) agreed that staff participated in shared decision-making, compared with 82 per cent of Halton elementary teachers. While a minority (18%) were uncertain of the extent to which they were involved, a similar number (15%) did not

feel that they participated. In contrast, virtually all of them (94%) believed they should be involved.

Teacher comments ranged from those who felt included in decision-making to a few others who believed they had little input:

> *"I would say most of the everyday decisions we have a say."*
>
> *". . . to a great extent in terms of the curriculum . . . I don't think there are any real dictates that come from the top."*
>
> *"I think I'm involved, because _____ always lets us have our say if it is something that directly involves me and my class. But . . . to make a decision that there was going to be a school-wide theme, I was not involved in that."*
>
> *"We may discuss it, but decisions have been made."*

Most interviewees agreed, however, that they were considerably more involved than they had ever been. The principal continued to struggle with decision-making, and admitted that it was an evolving process that needed refinement. The issue of ultimate accountability concerned her: could she defend all decisions made by staff?

> *"Eventually, I decided 'yes' if they were safe both morally and physically, and if they reflected our Burgundy Focus."*

Another issue was responsibility. The principal felt that some staff would rather not decide anything *("less responsibility for them, more accountability for me").* The school effectiveness questionnaire results afforded her the opportunity to re-open the discussion around decision-making at a staff meeting devoted to the topic:

> *"What I want them hopefully to come up with is what are the kinds of decisions that we want to be involved in, and what should form the foundation for the decisions . . . that will be really meaningful and not something down on paper."*

The challenge faced by this principal in trying to change the norms around decision-making while at the same time maintaining her own values and beliefs, reflects the complexity of the change process and time required to build a new culture. Clearly, she also believed that some teachers did not want to take responsibility for decision-making, while the results of the questionnaire demonstrated that all of them did. This illustrates the subtleties of the micropolitics of relationships within

schools (Ball, 1987; Sarason, 1990). (For further discussion, see Chapter 10.)

Changes to Organisational Structures

Several structural changes were made by the principal. Early on, she developed a timetable that gave grades 1 to 6 teachers common team planning time, and assigned herself and the vice principal coverage to allow for further team planning. This she treated seriously, and only attended urgent meetings during that time. To allow teachers within divisions time to plan together, half-day events were planned for students in these classes. Division team meetings were also restructured with a chairperson given special responsibilities and supported with four days' attendance at a cooperative group learning workshop. During this time, the administrative team covered classes.

These structural changes were all oriented towards greater collaboration among staff. While these attempts were successful to an extent (see next section), by 1991 there was still a feeling of barriers between the divisions. Noted one teacher:

> *"I think the only negative thing that I can see is that there is still that separation between kindergarten to grade 5 and grades 6, 7 and 8 . . . I think the crossgrade integration or movement of activities or learning experiences is something that can overcome that. It is something that we have been trying to do."*

Other efforts to promote collegiality occurred simultaneously.

Promotion of Staff Collegiality

Recognition and celebration were highlighted. Flowers, thank-you notes, public and private recognition and 'treats' became frequent occurrences. One teacher commented:

> *"This is the first school I have been at where there are continuing notes of appreciation, some recognition for the fact that you . . . have worked hard at something. I find the staff happier than they were."*

Other teachers also talked of feeling valued. On one professional development retreat, when the school was let down by an external facilitator, the principal persuaded the staff development committee to

organise and run the event themselves. Time was devoted to team-building activities and getting to know people better.

By 1991, in response to the effective schools questionnaire, Burgundy teachers were more positive than their colleagues throughout Halton on items related to working relationships, respect and recognition (see Table D1-3).

Table D1-3
Relationships, respect and recognition — a comparison between Burgundy and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Burgundy (N=33)	**Halton (N=288)**
High levels of trust and mutal respect exist in this school.	85	69
Teachers like working in this school.	94	82
New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	97	90
Successes of teachers are recognized.	76	72
People in this school work together as a team.	82	79

Only one teacher left the school at the end of the 1990-1991 school year, and that was for promotion. Teachers commented:

> *". . . people want to stay . . . not because of staying stagnant, because we are working very hard to change things . . . but because they enjoy being here . . . team-work - it's here and it hasn't been asked for."*

> *". . . it is an extremely caring group of people, and that is why nobody has left . . . out of more than 40 staff, to not have one person leave in a year, that is unbelievable! It is because they all recognise that there is something special happening here . . . I am part of something that is not usual."*

Collegiality may be desirable, but collegiality for its own sake does not bring about improvement (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). Teachers need to collaborate around something meaningful, and little is more meaningful to teachers than the essence of what goes on in the classroom.

An Emphasis on Learning

In line with her beliefs that all students can learn and that the school should become a community of life-long learners, the principal highlighted curriculum and instruction and emphasised staff development.

Instruction and Curriculum Focus

School-wide themes and cooperative group learning were introduced, and, in an attempt to break down barriers of specialisation before secondary school, integrated curriculum was incorporated in grades 7 and 8. This was collaboratively planned by teachers which was often frustrating, as one noted:

> *" . . . there were six of us . . . six people who are real individuals, with very distinctive styles in teaching, and there were a lot of arguments . . . and yet at the end of the sessions, we were proud of the results and we weren't afraid of differing opinions."*

It appears that teacher disagreement is critical in a collegial support group. This is when learning takes place and people's paradigms are challenged. It seems that for this group, at least, collaboration promoted considerable reflection.

For some teachers, the school-wide theme was a success, particularly those in smaller teams that worked well together:

> *"Our team is now used to planning together. We plan all our themes together, but because it was school-wide, it caused . . more excitement and gave the atmosphere that everyone was doing something . . . I think our school theme certainly is a means of bringing the school and staff together cohesively."*

> *". . . I remember thinking 'I am really enjoying this. I am really!' Because the kids just were so excited and so motivated."*

For a few others, the experience was less positive:

> *". . . we have difficulty with our team. I am with two half-time people, and there have been problems."*

Most teachers appeared to examine their work to see what changes might be necessary:

"It was the first time we did that particular unit, so you learn timing, you learn resources. But, also, next year you're going to be working with a different group of kids and you're going to have to change that to meet their needs."

Evaluation, however, was less consistent. While for a couple of those interviewed, it was detailed and focused on the learning objectives of the school-wide theme, others used less formal methods or did not seem to evaluate what they did.

"The children did a research project, and we developed criteria for how we would mark that. We have a sheet for each child on the different aspects of the research and how well they did at each stage. We gave them a test for knowledge. We also relied a lot on observation of skills that the children developed."

"We did it on a day-to-day basis. We would usually sit down and talk about how a particular event was successful or not successful . . . so, I think we were constantly cross-pollinating just to make sure that it was really working."

"We never did (evaluate the unit). *We were asked to meet, and this has never taken place."*

The system results of the effective schools questionnaire demonstrated that teachers were uncertain about aspects of monitoring students' progress. This was more marked in Burgundy's results. While 91 per cent of the system sample reported that student progress was regularly and systematically monitored and assessed, and 8 per cent were uncertain, the equivalent percentages for Burgundy teachers were 79 and 15 respectively. Similarly, three-quarters of the system sample agreed that teachers used assessment results for subsequent planning while 23 per cent were unsure. At Burgundy, only 58 per cent reported such use of assessment results, whereas more than a third (36%) were uncertain. Evaluation was also an issue in school growth planning (see section on School Growth Planning). Neglect of evaluation is a potential danger of school-based decision-making (see discussion in Chapter 10). Despite uncertainty over evaluation it appeared, within two years, that the teachers perceived and were beginning to respond to a greater curriculum and instructional emphasis. When asked about changes in their school over the previous three years, teachers highlighted more awareness in the school of what current needs were, more encouragement to try out new teaching strategies, and a principal knowledgeable about the curriculum.

Staff Development

Essential to an instructional and curriculum emphasis and student achievement is staff development (Joyce and Showers, 1987), which was one of the principal's key strategies.

At the end of June, on a professional development day retreat before her formal placement, she invited the researcher to introduce the staff, through a series of activities, to the effective schools model, rationale, and school growth planning process. Early staff development activities, other than the day retreat in June, included a whole-day classroom management session in October *"to introduce a common language and approach"*. This was later extended through the collaborative development of a behaviour policy, a growth plan goal activity.

The principal immediately worked closely with the staff development committee:

> *"I think in the past they had to do a lot of things completely by themselves, and that was hard for them because trying to influence people and also . . . putting everything together was difficult, . . . by working with them, they felt supported."*

Part-way through her first year, she initiated a school growth planning team, composed of all members of the staff development committee who wished to be involved (two chose not to) and two other volunteers. These people initiated and coordinated the school growth plan (see later section), and led the team-building retreat described earlier.

Funds were provided for staff to attend 'appropriate' sessions in pairs or triads, the rationale being that more learning would occur and be applied if teachers coached each other (Joyce and Showers, 1982). By summer 1991, 40 per cent of the staff had attended four-day institutes on cooperative group learning. Clearly, there was some direction over staff development choices. Nonetheless, Burgundy teachers felt they had the opportunity to meet their individual needs as well as seeing an increasing focus on whole school or group development initiatives. Outside speakers and board consultants worked with individuals, groups and the whole staff. Interviewed teachers felt that staff development was encouraged and supported, that administrators always tried to find supply coverage to enable people to attend conferences, and that the professional development committee granted individual requests that were justified and reasonable.

In her first year at Burgundy, the principal involved the school with Toronto's Faculty of Education and the Learning Consortium. Consortium consultants worked with staff on classroom management and cooperative group learning, and introduced other strategies. The school hosted eight student teachers. The principal reported that she was endeavouring to help staff make connections between everything in which they were involved: the pre-service to in-service continuum; collaboration and its link to instructional strategies; and the importance of the teacher as a learner (Fullan et al., 1990).

Excepting the promotion of staff collegiality, most of the principal's actions described thus far were fairly concrete. All the while, however, she also tried to approach less tangible, but extremely influential, issues, for example teachers' beliefs and values. Her ultimate goal, she noted, was the development of shared vision.

Shared Vision and Mission

Barth (1990) comments: *"Vision unlocked is energy unlocked"* (p. 151).

Burgundy's principal started at her new school with an idea of what she wanted to achieve, articulated in the beliefs outlined earlier.

> *"I made it very clear what I believed in right from the beginning at a staff meeting at the beginning of school . . . about my goals, about kids, teachers, and how important they were."*

Her challenge was to get the teachers to articulate their own beliefs and from there to come to a common understanding of what Burgundy stood for. She attempted to achieve this by providing opportunities for teachers to talk, reflect, and work together, as well as through strategies described earlier.

In particular, much time was spent discussing everything good done for students. This emphasis on the positive links back to the choice of name 'school growth plan'; the word 'growth' demonstrates that excellent activities might already be happening but there is always room for growth. Teachers' sense of efficacy has been shown elsewhere to be related to their motivation (Lortie, 1985).

At the end of the first year, the professional development day was devoted to the articulation of a common mission. In the principal's words:

> *"We . . . took an entire day to come up with our **'Together, Learning and Caring'**. By the time people left, they felt really good about what they'd done because they had to struggle with it and they got into some discussions about what was really important for them. They spent a lot of time clarifying their values and beliefs about kids and learning, and even that day we were able to identify the sort of major areas that they wanted to focus in on . . ."*

A year later, teachers' responses to the questionnaire demonstrated that all of them believed their school had a clearly articulated mission and that most (79%) felt that the staff were committed to it. Furthermore, 91 per cent (compared with 82% of the system sample) believed that their staff was committed to change, growth and improvement.

All of those interviewed felt they had been involved in the statement's development, and that it had ultimately been a unanimous choice. Generally, they believed it was important for their school to have a mission statement because it provided a common focus:

> *"A focus for your teaching and something that you are working towards . . . it keeps you on track."*

> *". . . for a certain cohesiveness it is necessary. I feel it is a good thing because we are a team. We are a group working together so I think it brings everybody into focus as to what we are all about."*

It was noted, however, that *"if the school didn't have a mission statement, the caring would still be there, and the learning would still be there . . . it's just verbalising what already exists."*

Louis and Miles (1990), in their high school study, suggest that a mission statement follows from the evolution of a plan, rather than preceding it. In this elementary school, the statement came first, but the above quote and similar sentiments expressed by other teachers suggest that the philosophy of a shared vision is far more important than its articulation into a catchphrase.

Teachers interviewed believed that people in their school worked together, whether within a particular team, division (kindergarten to grade 3=primary division; grades 4 to 6=junior division; grades 7 and 8=intermediate division), or the staff as a whole. It appeared, however, as noted earlier, that there was some balkanisation (Hargreaves, 1989) between divisions, barriers to be broken down. Two teachers commented:

". . . there are different levels. I think definitely that the team I work with has a shared purpose. I don't know if our shared purpose, in a specific sense, would be the same as another team's, but generally they might be. It's a very large staff . ."

"They all know where they want to go, but they . . . might get there using different routes and tools. But everyone has the interests of the kids at heart . . . we are beginning cross-groupings . . ."

Although this was an elementary school, it was large and, as such, shared certain inhibitors to whole-school change with secondary schools, for example, its division structure and number of teachers.

School Growth Planning

The key focus areas for the school began to evolve during the day in June 1990 when the mission statement was generated. The following September, the growth plan team continued to refine the areas, and staff brainstormed activities, and selected areas of particular interest to join committees that would develop these in more detail. The principal later reflected:

"We decided that we had far too much . . . so we kept coming back to it . . . because you did need time to think about it. In fact we did end up reducing our areas of emphasis and created two."

The two areas selected mirror themes discussed thus far. The first was 'academics', which incorporated *"a programme that meets students' needs"*. Cooperative group learning, integrated curriculum and school-wide themes were seen as means to achieve this. Also included was student acceptance of responsibility for their learning and involvement in decision-making and recognition of learning, correlates from school effectiveness research. The second area was 'school community', which included staff cohesiveness, student discipline and the environment, also school effectiveness characteristics. Essentially, therefore, the school's goals grew out of ongoing work and the articulation of their beliefs and values. In one teacher's words:

"I see the goal plan as a result of some other things . . ."

By 1991, Burgundy teachers were almost unanimous that they had clear goals (see Table D1-4), although they did not all view planning as a collaborative process. Perhaps this was because the growth plan team

coordinated the effort and made final refinements. However, fewer Burgundy staff (76%) than those in the system sample (91%) believed all teachers needed to be involved. Teacher interviews suggested that all staff were as involved as they wished to be and all felt they had input.

While not all Burgundy staff agreed that their peers considered the goals important, none disagreed. Rather, some were uncertain about how their colleagues viewed the goals. All those interviewed, however, were committed to the goals. Interestingly, most could not remember all the areas of emphasis within the goals, even though they had a copy of the document. This suggests that teachers do not necessarily see 'the big picture'. Instead, once they have helped to structure the overall framework, they are mainly concerned with areas that impact them directly. It could also be that Burgundy really had many goals, masked within two overall headings. This raises the issue of what a school growth plan reasonably should contain (see Chapter 10 for further discussion).

Table D1-4
School growth planning - a comparison between Burgundy and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Burgundy (N=33)	**Halton (N=288)**
The school has developed a set of clearly stated goals.	97	84
Planning is a collaborative process involving all staff.	61	77
Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.	70	48
Staff consider the school goals to be important.	79	75
Activities throughout the school support and reinforce school goals.	88	86
School goals are shared with the school community.	91	75
School goals are regularly reviewed by the staff.	53	72
Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.	48	62

Parents, students and community members were seen by most Burgundy staff to have input into their planning process, and more of them (73%) than the system sample (60%) felt that the wider school community should have input. Teachers were also unanimous that goals were shared with the community. The parents, in their own survey, corroborated most of these findings. Sixty-nine per cent felt they had input into the process, and 75 per cent thought goals were shared with them, the majority of the remainder being unsure.

The area of growth planning over which there was considerably less confidence was monitoring and evaluation. Some of those interviewed referred to a year-end process to examine what had been accomplished; others reported this was the Principal's responsibility, but as one noted:

> *"I can see it* (the school growth plan) *very difficult to evaluate. I can see that administration could find it difficult to keep on top of exactly how people are incorporating it into their programmes."*

The principal, herself, commented on the challenges of monitoring and evaluation:

> *"That is still an issue that I don't know we do very well, and suspect we don't do well at all. A lot of it is gut feeling, particularly around student achievement . . . I can look at test scores, but they don't really tell me anything. There are so many factors that fall around students' achievements. We use parent comments when we are doing an effective schools survey with parents to see how they feel . . . I guess the school resource team . . . is another way of monitoring whether or not people are using different strategies, and our Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation process. We have evaluated most of the teachers now. That gives us a pretty good handle on what's going on . . . In just talking to the kids, I think I can get a pretty good handle on it . . . I can track, but making sure that people have made gains? My gut says that they have, but can I technically determine whether it is directly related to what the school growth plan is doing . . . how do I know that?"*

This quote demonstrates the complexities of school self-evaluation. This principal used many systematic strategies to monitor teaching and the growth plan's implementation, yet she ultimately felt that she relied on gut reaction to measure the school's success. As a consequence of the teacher survey, a portion of every subsequent staff meeting was devoted to reports from different growth plan committees, and the growth plan team

started to examine academic and social success indicators. (Evaluation is further discussed in Chapter 10.)

Did Burgundy teachers really believe in the value of growth planning? Questionnaire results suggest that the vast majority felt it was important to have goals, and individual interviews confirmed this. When asked why the school was engaged in growth planning, teachers discussed the importance of having a focus:

> *"You have to have somewhere to start. Anybody has to have some kind of plan. It's like a map. You go from here to here."*
>
> *". . . if you don't do something as a group, then chances are you may be all going off in different directions and you don't have a common goal."*
>
> *"Because . . . if we have a focus - a goal that we can see ahead of us, the things we do daily will have more meaning."*

Teachers also seemed to feel that school growth planning was developmental, and changing directions were part of the process:

> *"You might not always reach exactly what the goal is because you change and adapt as you are going along, but I think having that focus there in the first place is really important."*
>
> *"I is always a changing thing. It is not something that is going to stay. But at least we have some direction."*

This confirms Louis and Miles' (1990) finding at secondary level that planning is evolutionary in nature.

Teachers reported several difficulties associated with growth planning. These included the amount of work for planning and the number of meetings, the few people who did not follow the plan or 'buy in' to it, the complexity of evaluation, and leaving planning until the end of the year when everyone was fatigued. Nonetheless, all those interviewed believed their plan would make Burgundy more effective, although, again, some did not know how they might measure this.

The themes described above interweave and overlap. They are all linked by one further theme that was also a strong undercurrent in the teachers' interviews; the leadership of the principal.

Leadership

Burgundy's principal expressed a belief in the principal as instructional leader. Reflecting on her early days at Burgundy, she mused:

> *"I have often thought about whether this is leadership or manipulation? . . . Positive manipulation is what I call it!"*

On the instructional side, she and the vice principals made regular visits to classes. Teachers commented:

> *"She is always in the rooms. She is always showing interest and takes the time to have the kids come down to her room and read their stories or share what they have done and what their accomplishments are."*

> *"They're always in the classroom. Just about every day they go through the school . . . visiting the classrooms. They're very aware of what goes on in there. I think that's a strength."*

Cooperative supervision with teachers was increased. When she looked through teachers' files when she arrived, there were few detailed evaluations. She noted teachers' anxiety when the administrative team began the supervision process but felt that it proved to be a positive experience because most teachers learned what an effective job they did and where they could or needed to develop. She also incorporated collaboration by setting teams supervision goals with common objectives, although she admitted her ulterior motive:

> *"Initially I did this for my survival since monitoring takes considerable time . . . the collegiality and collaboration that resulted strengthened teams and the quality of work."*

The questionnaire results confirmed the focus on observation and supervision. Ninety-four per cent of Burgundy teachers reported that the administrative team observed in classrooms (compared with 67% of the system sample), 97 per cent agreed that they used the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation process to assist in the improvement of instruction (compared with 84% of the system sample) and all of them felt the administrative team were visible throughout the school (compared with 90% of the system sample). The principal was also viewed as being knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction:

"She is up-to-date on all the curriculum. She encourages us to try new curriculum, communicating with people and letting me as a teacher know what she thinks about what I am doing."

The principal also became a member of the school resource team, to whom students with special educational needs were referred. In so doing, she hoped to emphasise her knowledge of and commitment to special education, belief in equity, and support for the laborious referral process.

Her high expectations, recognition, empowerment and support were seen by staff as bringing out the best in people:

"She empowers us to do what we have to do to make it work."

"She shows that she cares about her staff and the commitment and effort and time that is put into our teaching. I have never worked for anyone like her and I think she is terrific. She really makes you feel that what you do is important."

"She . . . gets everyone to produce . . . gets them to meet potential. She takes an interest in everyone."

There was also a feeling that people now worked harder but were under less pressure and were less stressed. This description bears more resemblance to Glickman's (1991) view of the principal as a coordinator of instructional leaders; one who mobilises teachers' talent. Her support for professional development seemed to add to this. Almost all of the teachers (94%) believed she promoted development activities (versus 86% of the system sample).

Did the teachers feel that the principal communicated a clear vision? Virtually all (91%, versus 83% of the system sample) perceived this to be so. She was viewed as 'setting the tone' for the rest of the school:

"We know where we're going now, what the expectations are, and the goals and ideas . . . we know where we're going is better than what we've had going back four or five years."

Clearly, this vision was not seen as one that blinded or overwhelmed the teachers (Fullan 1992b) but, rather, a gentler approach that harnessed support and enthusiasm.

Foremost, however, teachers felt their principal was a 'people person': very caring, genuine, a good communicator, and always ready to listen:

> *"If you need to see her, she's there right away . . . She's always there when you need her. She's a good listener and she's very supportive."*
>
> *". . . she is extremely caring, sensitive and it is not fabricated. The students are also aware of it, and when she is not here for a while, I feel it and we all feel it."*

Additionally, the principal was seen as having a good relationship with students and their parents:

> *"She knows how to deal effectively with staff, students and parents."*
>
> *". . . of course she loves kids."*

Although her hope was to be an instructional leader, Burgundy's principal appeared to exceed this. In her efforts to build and bond those around her, she demonstrated the capacities of a transformational leader (Sergiovanni, 1990; Leithwood, 1992). Although Burgundy was not a perfect school in June 1991, it had an aura of growth, community and learning, a big shift from two years previously. This has to be attributed, at least in part, to the principal. If the principal is not directly responsible for pupil achievement as some Dutch research suggests (van de Grift, 1990), it seems reasonable to assume that the principal can be a key influence on teachers whose work does directly impact pupil outcomes.

Conclusion

This case profile serves several purposes. First, it illustrates the results of the elementary effective schools questionnaire (see Chapter 7). Second, and more importantly, it demonstrates the genesis and implementation of school growth planning and highlights the prerequisites or fundamental conditions of growth planning outlined earlier in Chapters 5 and 10. Third, it demonstrates the blend of school improvement processes and school effectiveness characteristics and beliefs within one school.

APPENDIX D 2

Case Profile - Red Maple High School

The largest secondary school in Halton, with 1700 14 to 19 year-old students and 15 portable classrooms erected to cope with rapid growth, Red Maple is located in the centre of Oakville. In 1991, the teaching staff of 101 included a number who had been at the school since it opened in 1965 or arrived shortly thereafter, and several others with 16 to 20 years at the school. Less than a half had taught at Red Maple for between 5 and 15 years. The remainder were more recent arrivals, and Red Maple has recently acquired a reputation for fairly significant staff turnover. This has not been for negative reasons but, more often, for promotion or change encouraged by the principal.

The student population had changed considerably over the previous five years with over 20 per cent from ethnic minority backgrounds. English as a Second Language students continued to enrol in large numbers from the Far and Middle East, South America, Western and Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Although Oakville is one of the most affluent communities in Canada, Red Maple's catchment area did not reflect this wealth, although it was predominantly middle class.

The principal moved from another school to Red Maple in 1985 where he remained until September 1991 when he was seconded as Halton's Ethnocultural Coordinator. From 1985 to 1991 he worked with a series of vice principals, two at a time, who were placed at the school for between two and three years each.

The principal's predecessor was due to retire in June 1985 but chose not to. Therefore, the two principals worked together until December 1985, which was viewed as a challenge to the new principal and *"had a bearing on what I was able to do in those first four months"*, although, at the same time, he felt that it led to a smoother transition. At this time, many of the staff had been at the school for a long time, and in his perception, they were 'very close knit' and supportive of each other, due to 'unfortunate incidents' with the previous principal. As one long-serving teacher noted of the former principal:

> *"When _____ was here, the staff had a focus and the focus was a general dislike of the principal . . . that brought them together under a common cause."*

One of the principal's initial observations was that many students left the school early; 80 to 100 each year. From his entry interviews he discovered two reasons for this. The first was a narrow curriculum that lacked many popular courses. The second was a popular move in other schools to semestering, a modular structure whereby the school year was divided into two and students took half their courses in the first semester and half in the second.

Of his first few months, the principal reflected:

> *"I trod very slowly . . . minimal changes to organisation, programme, type of instruction . . . or anything. Also, an opportunity to build trust and confidence with people."*

This appeared to be a wise move. Other over-zealous principals in Halton had made sweeping changes to schools shortly after taking up their positions that disrupted cultural norms and caused considerable resentment (Stoll and Fink, 1992b). Sensitivity to a school's history and current values appears to be essential, even if staff demonstrate they are ready for change.

Climate-Setting

While the principal waited and watched, he developed his strategy to initiate change. As in the elementary case profile, this started with climate-setting, in particular changes to organisational structures.

Changes to Organisational Structures

As soon as the previous principal left, his successor made a presentation to staff on semestering:

> *". . . because I thought to make the kind of changes I wanted to make in the school, I had to have a catalyst . . . and semestering would be an obvious catalyst."*

In few schools in Halton was data collection for decision-making more widely used than in Red Maple, and the principal used this strategy immediately. Presentations were made to students and parents and surveys administered to all groups. Results showed that over 90 per cent of staff, 95 per cent of parents and all of the students supported semestering. The organisational change was made quickly, and brought with it many related changes to policies and procedures, for example

attendance, lateness-reporting and field trips. Incorporated within these changes was one related to decision-making.

Decision-Making

Planning the details of semestering was given over to a group of committees composed of staff members. The principal explained:

> *"It was at this point that the whole notion of empowering staff . . . came into being because we made up a series of sub-committees . . . and various staff who had been dying for opportunities to have some leadership experiences, different experiences, chaired those committees . . . so it was up to them to design the reorganisation structure as they felt they wanted it."*

The principal made only one expectation mandatory: to have three full reports home in the first semester. This was, he mused, the only autocratic decision he ever made and was, in his view, the least popular. This does not mean that the principal did not have clear ideas regarding responsibility for decision-making, but he appeared aware that since curriculum and programme change would ultimately be implemented at classroom level, this was the level where empowerment was most necessary (see, also Patterson et al., 1986).

Gradually, a decision-making model was built that involved staff considerably but not totally. The principal, vice principals and heads of department formed a cabinet responsible for policy and procedure decisions, including budget. Interested teachers, at least one per department, formed a programme planning team responsible for cross-curricular issues. A department head acted as liaison to the cabinet. A goals committee was chaired initially by a vice principal and comprised of the principal, several interested heads and teachers, two students and, from 1990 onwards, two parents and a member of the office staff. This committee was in charge of coordinating the school growth plan (see School Growth Plan section). Finally, daily decisions related to student discipline, teacher supervision and evaluation, and general operational issues were the charge of the principal and vice principals alone.

A handbook of meeting procedures was ultimately compiled and, the principal noted, all further decisions while he was at the school were based on consensus. Like his elementary counterpart, this had its drawbacks and the changes were challenging. He felt he had inherited a group of department heads *"who said 'yes and no sir' to the previous*

principal", some of whom were also very loyal to his predecessor. He perceived his relationship with this group as being critical. Through retirements and counselling, some of these people left the school and were replaced by new heads who shared the principal's philosophy around decision-making. Nonetheless, further work with this group was still necessary, according to one:

> *"I would say at this point . . . we've fallen apart as a team. We need a mission of our own in terms of the future."*

Even though the principal did not always totally agree with staff decisions, he did not intervene. He explained:

> *"I think it's important to look at the processes that were going on. One, obviously, is to influence staff, to give them some authority for what happens in the building, to build trust relationships with staff, and so I worked hard at those kinds of things and the semestering experience proved to them that I was not going to intercede even if I didn't particularly care for things, and there weren't very many instances where there was something that I didn't particularly care for. As you might expect, people will do the reasonable thing . . . the most appropriate thing and tailor it to their needs . . . I just made myself a promise I wasn't going to intercede and I didn't have to."*

Thus, at Red Maple by 1991 there was a clearly laid-out model for decision-making that allowed for broad involvement in certain key areas, most notably curriculum, but set boundaries in the areas of procedures. How did teachers view decision-making? Interestingly, although a similar percentage of Red Maple teachers (71%) as their Halton peers (72%) felt that staff participated in shared decision-making, none of them disputed this whereas 14% of the system sample disagreed that staff participated.

Several staff noted greater participation in decision-making over the previous few years:

> *"I see a definite emphasis on a shared responsibility as a school . . . and I believe the school has changed from a very administration-focused school to a school that runs itself through committees."*
>
> *". . . the programme planning team is significant because it allowed for 20 individuals, many of whom were not heads, to buy into a process where they felt that they were having a*

significant influence and where they were participating in policy decisions in the school."

A drawback, noted by one staff member, was an increase in 'politicking' that the broader spread of influence caused at times. Nonetheless, overall, people seemed to feel adequately involved. Perhaps this was due to communication, a challenging issue for secondary schools. Teacher interviewees reported being well informed of everything that occurred by department heads and administration and rated their principal and vice principals highly on open and frank communication (91% agreed, compared with 78 per cent of the system sample).

Hiring Practices

In their interviews, several teachers talked of the influx of younger, more energetic teachers and attributed this to the principal's hiring policy. As in Burgundy, teachers were involved in hiring their peers, but it was clear that this was an area where the principal exerted considerable influence.

The principal, himself, was critical of the board's hiring policy, in which principals worked in teams to select suitable candidates for a pool. Pool hirees would then be interviewed at an individual school or, sometimes even placed there. Rather, he wished complete control over the hiring process. School-based planning in Halton falls between centralisation and decentralisation. Red Maple's principal's preference was for complete decentralisation, although he credited Halton with giving him some independence:

"I have always been one that has espoused the integrity of each individual school and the system. In fact, that is something I . . . relish about working in Halton is the opportunity to arrive at a sense of independence, a sense of identification of what we here are all about . . . but I would love to do all my own hiring . . . how can one possibly get our own school needs met by taking somebody from a pool? It's counterproductive to what we're trying to do. We're talking about individuality of schools."

The key issue of centralisation versus decentralisation is discussed in Chapter 10.

The physical environment and parental and community involvement were also tackled early on, although they appeared to be less central to the functioning of Red Maple than Burgundy (see Appendix D1).

Physical Environment

The principal noted one issue of power between his predecessor and staff was that no teacher had a key to the office, even though the photocopier and other equipment were in the office:

> *". . . nobody would stay after 4 o'clock because the office was closed at 4 o'clock . . . so the first thing I did was give heads keys to the office. If they wanted to let someone in the department in after school that was fine by me."*

In this example, the power barriers were not broken down completely, but they were shifted down to the next level. Certainly, on all the researcher's visits to the school after 4 o'clock, there were always several teachers in the office and many around the school (see, also, Staff Development).

In their questionnaire responses, teachers were more positive than their Halton peers about the physical condition of the school, three-quarters (76%) noting it was attractive, clean and well-kept (compared with 68% of the system sample). Slightly more of them (60%) than the system sample (53%) also felt that attention was given to keeping display areas current and attractive.

Attention to the physical environment may have been essential in this school, however, because overcrowding was clearly an issue, just from the sheer volume of students moving around the school (see, also Student Involvement).

Parental and Community Involvement and Support

An increase in involvement and support of the community was mainly attributed by teachers to the principal, although the school had run monthly 'Tuesday at 10' sessions prior to his arrival, where parents could discuss issues or find out more about the school's programme. Teachers particularly commended the principal for his attention to public relations, and felt that the school now received more positive media attention.

From the principal's perspective, when he arrived the community *"had pretty well distanced themselves from the school which was the way the previous principal wanted it."* Little interaction occurred and complaints or concerns were ignored. The new principal immediately involved them in the decision about semestering, increased home contact and the number of reports home, and started a regular newsletter. In

1990, after the onset of school growth planning, he sent them a report card to voice their opinions and rate the school. Of 1600 distributed, only 44 were returned, demonstrating a common challenge of secondary schools: obtaining parental feedback. Despite the poor response rate, most of Red Maple teachers (81%) felt fairly confident that their school encouraged parental feedback about the programme's quality (this compared with only 56% of the system sample). More of them (62%) than the system sample (44%) also believed that parents and the community had input into the school's planning process and that their goals were shared with the community (62%, versus 53% of the system sample). Of the 44 parents who responded to the survey, 68 per cent reported awareness of the school's goals, and 86 per cent were satisfied with information received about the school's programme.

Parents' and community members' physical presence in the school, particularly as a resource, was not perceived positively by teachers. While nearly three-quarters (71%) felt the staff should encourage them to help out in school, only 38 per cent believed they actually did, although a similar percentage were uncertain. Even more significantly, the majority (81%) believed that teachers should use local volunteers in classrooms (compared with only 35% of the system sample). No teachers, however, reported parental help in classrooms, and more than half (52%) did not know whether other teachers used them or not. Although secondary teachers were, generally, less enthusiastic than their elementary peers concerning parental involvement and support, over 60 per cent of Red Maple teachers rated all items in this section of the questionnaire as important. The question remains, why were they, therefore, not more involved? Clearly, societal pressures with more parents having to work is one possible explanation. Another might be that underneath it, teachers did not really want to give away the little power they felt they have. An illustration of this occurs in the principal's comments:

> *"This school, before I got here, would never listen to criticism of this place . . . Just the opposite should be happening. We should be encouraging so that we hear it, . . . channel it, and then respond to it."*

Power relationships are further discussed in Chapter 10. These also impact student involvement.

Student Involvement and Responsibility

The first sentence of Red Maple's philosophy statement (see Shared Vision and Mission section) read:

> **"Red Maple High School recognises that students are the basis of its existence."**

Further into the statement, the belief in student involvement and responsibility was articulated:

> **"All students will have opportunities to develop a feeling of ownership in the school through participation in decisions which affect them and through sharing in the responsibility for creating and maintaining positive school climate . . . Students are encouraged to make a commitment to societal participation through an emphasis on involvement and citizenship within both the school and the community . . ."**

The school appeared to be engaged in a variety of activities to turn this statement into reality. Leadership was promoted through opportunities for students to become involved in the student council and student network. The council was encouraged to develop a goal and activities of its own to be incorporated into the growth plan, and chose environmental awareness both outside the school and on school property. Students also formed a 'students against drugs' group which held seminars and discussions, and invited speakers, and a peer helpers programme was implemented. Generally Red Maple staff were more confident (95%) than their system peers (77%) that students were given leadership responsibilities.

Cooperative group learning was viewed by teachers as a more student-oriented approach and several teachers commented on greater student involvement and responsibility in class as their methods changed. Student self-evaluation was also noted by a small number.

By 1991, three-quarters (76%) of the teachers believed that students had a say in decisions that affected them, although only a similar number believed that this was important. Nonetheless, only 44 per cent of the system sample reported similar student involvement at this time. Some Red Maple teachers, however, questioned whether students would really be interested in the goals unless they directly affected them.

Unlike many secondary schools visited by the researcher, Red Maple teachers did not appear to dwell on the subject of student behaviour. A few noted a general change related to a more relaxed society. Otherwise, the only issue of concern was the increasing number of students that led to overcrowding and resultant difficulties. One department head mused on the impersonal nature of a crowded building:

"My view is that the kids see the school as a mall."

Another compared the busyness to a local motorway, renowned for its traffic jams. There was some concern of the impact of overcrowding on school climate although people felt that attempts were being made to address this.

Overall, interviewed teachers believed that students enjoyed school, although this was not borne out in the questionnaire results. Whereas most (86%) believed that the atmosphere in the school promoted learning (compared with 71% of their Halton counterparts), only approximately a half felt that a positive feeling permeated the school (52%, compared with 62% of the system sample) and that students were enthusiastic about learning (48%, compared with 43% of the system sample).

Self-esteem and equity were clear foci of the school, noted by several teachers in their interpretation of the philosophy statement, and articulated in the statement itself:

> **"We seek to develop in our students self-esteem and heightened self-awareness through success-oriented learning and co-curricular activities within a school environment which fosters mutual respect and tolerance, which values individual differences, and which is free of fear, coercion, harassment, and prejudice. We are committed to providing equal opportunity for all students."**

Recognition systems were set up, including the 'principal's award of merit' for students in general level courses. The general level and enrichment committees designed and implemented staff and student activities and staff development programmes, and another committee developed an ethnocultural policy for the school, the first in Halton and a forerunner to Halton's policy. By 1991, general recognition and self-concept efforts appeared to have had impact, whereas teachers were less certain about equity (see Table D2-1).

Table D2-1
Student self-esteem and equity: a comparison between Red Maple and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Red Maple (N=21)	Halton (N=181)
Teachers treat students fairly and with respect.	95	89
Students in this school see themselves as able, responsible and valuable.	71	61
Teachers work to enhance students' self-concept.	81	75
There are many opportunities for reward and recognition throughout the school.	91	82
All students are treated in ways which emphasize success and potential rather than failures and shortcomings.	52	60
Teachers praise **all** students for their accomplishments rather than only those who accomplish the most.	48	48

The principal, therefore, emphasised the critical nature of interaction, building relationships and trust, and communication. How did he go about developing these among staff?

Promotion of Staff Collegiality

Collegiality already existed, but mainly around a common dislike of the previous principal. Through his emphasis on committee work, the principal attempted to encourage teachers to channel their energy on behalf of the school. At the same time, he worked on relationships between the heads of department. All of this was time-consuming:

> *"Anything like this takes time because . . . other processes are happening and we are continuing to develop trust. It wasn't that we just semestered the school and everything worked. We had to ensure it worked . . . constantly, all the time, we're building relationships of trust with the staff and with kids . . . the underlying principles are relationships and trust, and processes have to be put in place to build decision-making procedures in the school, so it takes a minimum of two years. With organisations I know in the system, it might take three or four years."*

The principal seemed to feel it was slightly quicker at Red Maple because of the influx of younger staff and because *"there was clearly a readiness for change here".*

Fewer examples of overt teacher rewards or recognition were apparent in Red Maple than in Burgundy, and yet the broad opportunity for selection to the programme planning team or school goals committee was, in itself, a form of recognition. Generally, the staff responded positively to the gradually changing ethos. One commented:

> *"I think what's been attempted is to generate a different kind of school culture, cooperative culture, in which staff members are encouraged in their personal and professional growth and supported . . . by their colleagues and by administration."*

The results of the effective schools questionnaire in the area of trust, relationships and respect were also mainly positive in comparison to colleagues throughout Halton (see Table D2-2).

Table D2-2
Relationships, respect and recognition - a comparison between Red Maple and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Red Maple (N=21)	**Halton (N=181)**
High levels of trust and mutual respect exist in this school.	81	57
Teachers like working in this school.	85	76
New staff are made to feel welcome in this school.	91	88
Successes of teachers are recognized	62	59
People in this school work together as a team.	91	75

While the principal attended to climate-setting and the development of collegiality, people within the school continued their focus on learning.

An Emphasis on Learning

During the 1990-91 school year, when the interviews and surveys were carried out, a considerable number of teachers also engaged in planning within and across departments, and professional development.

Instructional and Curriculum Emphasis

In the principal's interview, the emphasis of the discussion was not geared specifically to instructional issues. He pointed out the usefulness of the Leadership Effectiveness Assisted by Peers (LEAP) programme to give him a greater understanding of the instructional issues faced by teachers (see Chapter 5). His main emphasis, however, appeared to be on creating the culture, structures, and suitable climate for learning. Equally, the teachers did not view their administrators as placing particular priority on curriculum and instructional issues (38%, compared with 59% of the system sample), although slightly fewer Red Maple teachers (76%) than their Halton colleagues (84%) thought this was important. Nonetheless, the principal was not seen to provide the instructional leadership that some teachers wanted (see Leadership).

The department heads were seen by most teachers (86%) to promote development activities but only just over half (58%) thought that their department heads used the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation process, compared with 72 per cent of their Halton colleagues. Interviews, however, did not reveal a lack of emphasis on curriculum and instruction. In many instances it was generated by the teachers themselves. They appeared to be involved in both ongoing maintenance of their subject areas and newer projects that emphasised a variety of strategies. The programme planning team were particularly influential in this respect, and identified key development areas that included race and ethnocultural issues, computers, cooperative group learning, 'gifted' programme, 'general level' programme, and classroom evaluation. Committees had been set up to work in each of these areas.

All teachers believed that student progress was regularly monitored and assessed using a variety of methods of evaluation, and most believed that assessment results were used to give feedback to students (81%) and for programme planning (75%). Fewer (67%), however, reported that teachers communicated to students how and why they used particular assessment methods (almost a third were unsure whether this occurred). At the time of interview, several teachers were involved in a committee to develop a school evaluation policy. Two areas of discussion were greater student involvement in the evaluation process and greater use of authentic evaluation methods.

Some departments had joined together on specific projects, most notably English and technological studies, in the development of a media course.

This involved collaboration around teaching and evaluation strategies and professional development, offered both by outside staff and department members. Two commented:

> *". . . it bridged two departments that would never otherwise have a basis for communication . . . in terms of teacher liaison, it seems comfortable . . . I think it's going to be very helpful and it is going to nurture a good feeling that we're in this together, and we're going to take advantage of your technical know-how...and we're going to help you on some of the teaching strategies and instruction-based things . . ."*

> *"The presentation we're doing tomorrow is on how to create a workable group atmosphere, how to be evaluated, how to set up groups, how to monitor individuals' and groups' progress, so it is very much instruction-oriented."*

The offer of release time for collaborative planning or visiting other teachers' classes was also viewed as significant by these secondary teachers for whom it was a novel experience:

> *"I was definitely offered a supply teacher to help alleviate the extra time load and that was really the first time that's ever come about so I was really impressed that that was being offered."*

> *" _____ has given us some supply coverage, so the admin. support was to free us up . . ."*

At a staff meeting attended by the researcher, one of the presentations was by the English and technological studies departments heads, to encourage other departments to become involved. Ongoing feedback of this project's progress was regularly provided to staff, again demonstrating the emphasis on communication (see Table D2-3).

The results of the effective schools questionnaire in the area of teacher collegiality and development in 1991 were more similar to those of the elementary schools than the other secondary schools.

Table D2-3
Teacher collegiality and development - a comparison between Red Maple and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Red Maple (N=21)	**Halton (N=181)**
Teachers in this school are involved in ongoing professional development experiences.	90	85
Teachers in this school consistently look for ways to improve their knowledge of curriculum and instructional techniques.	85	68
Staff regularly collaborate to plan curriculum and instruction.	85	50
Teachers regularly share teaching skills and strategies	80	64

Teachers actively appeared to pursue new ideas and techniques. Attention now turns to the area of staff development.

Staff Development

As Table D2-3 shows, Red Maple teachers believed that they and their colleagues devoted significant energy to learning new techniques. Once again, this commitment seemed to come from within the teachers and department heads although it was actively promoted by administrators whom most teachers (81%) perceived as taking part in school-based staff development.

What was most noticeable in the interviews was that it was not only the newer and younger teachers who participated in professional development. Many of the experienced staff both attended external and school-based activities and offered them for their colleagues. In 1990-91, the staff chose to emphasise school-based staff development. On a needs assessment, they selected instruction as a key focus, which also tied in with the school growth plan (see School Growth Plan). Teachers described a myriad of offerings:

> *"We offered lunchtime sessions on classroom management . . and addressed the needs that were shown to be concerns of the staff."*

> *"The enrichment committee that I presented several strategies to are going to present to the staff as a whole, so it's sort of got a snowball effect."*

"There has been a large emphasis on trying to improve our instruction techniques . . . Cooperative group learning . . . that was a case of teachers who decided that they wanted to learn more."

"In math we made a commitment to do more on the lines of instruction . . . very much a pairing of the older with the newer teachers and some mentoring."

"We have what we call the 'general level smorgasbord' where we exchange ideas . . . that's been helpful in . . . developing evaluation strategies."

Teachers also commented on greater encouragement to attend external conferences and bring back information. Overload was mentioned by one teacher who supported and was actively involved in staff development but was worried that too much emphasis on studying methods had led to some people feeling overburdened. The involvement in learning so many strategies was clearly related to the broad scope of the growth plan (also discussed with reference to Burgundy - see Appendix D1 - and elaborated later in this case profile and Chapter 10).

Another area of staff development was Red Maple's involvement in the Learning Consortium. This took a different form to Burgundy. A few teachers, initially as individuals then as groups attended the Summer Institutes, and a couple became very involved in follow-up training. The school also invited the Consortium consultant to run several cooperative group learning workshops at the school. The organisers were fairly pleased with the turnout to these voluntary events. Since the end of the research, Red Maple has become involved in a variety of other Consortium and Ministry of Education projects.

After two years of climate-setting, the principal believed it was time for the staff to articulate their vision for the school.

Shared Vision and Mission

Red Maple's principal approached this task in a different way from his elementary counterpart at Burgundy. He used decision-making structures to involve people and focused on communication to build trust. The increase in staff development encouraged teachers to reflect on their practices, but still there were those who were less involved.

The genesis of a school philosophy occurred partly, as the principal remembered it, because of the school effectiveness literature that had appeared in Halton. He was particularly struck by Edmonds' (1979) work on equity, and started to reflect on the school's decisions around semestering and attendance. Questions formed in his mind:

> *"What are the consequences that are going to emerge as we deal with attendance, and behind that, what's the basis for all that? What can we hang our hat on and say, 'this is why we're doing it, this is the rationale for it or for anything else we do?' It seemed to me that everything needed some sort of rationale to be pegged to."*

His initial efforts to get words or key phrases that would form a 'snappy statement' failed even though he tried, through school-wide contests, to involve all teachers. Eventually, a committee was formed of a department head, vice principal, teacher and parent. These four worked for a year on a philosophy statement, constantly vetting it with individuals and the whole staff. In autumn 1987 it was brought to the staff all of whom endorsed it. The principal reflected:

> *"If you look at the statement . . . it is virtually any statement a school across North America would make. It's not all motherhood, but it's the kind of things one believes in if you are a decent school. Really, the important point is that all of us agreed to it . . . that meant that any decisions, anything we were going to undertake, would have to reflect that."*

Some of the teachers felt the role of adults and community underpinned the philosophy's essence:

> *". . . people are to be treated fairly. It's part of the larger group called the community and the school is not isolated from the community . . . everybody - teachers should be having input into how the school runs and what makes it work."*

For others, the philosophy's main intent was student development:

> *". . .* (It) *focuses on the students, providing them with equal opportunity. It emphasises caring . . . and the school's responsibilities toward helping students achieve to their potential. It talks about our school being fair, being free of harassment. It talks about our role as a school in the community and our responsibilities."*

Red Maple's principal saw the philosophy statement as a guiding force for everything that would subsequently occur. Thus, he endorsed the idea of

a mission or philosophy statement preceding the school's plan. On the surface, this contradicts Louis and Miles' (1990) finding that the plan leads to the vision rather than following from it. If, however, one considers all of the activities that had preceded this philosophy statement's development and the fact that the statement articulated some of what was already happening in the school as well as its vision for the future, this suggests that Red Maple's experience more closely matches the idea of 'ready, fire, aim', whereby the school only takes aim or articulates its purpose, after having fired many times or carried out a variety of activities. What is interesting is that once the aim has been made, or philosophy articulated, the school continues to fire through the development and implementation of growth plan activities related to its philosophy. Thus, the pattern becomes 'ready, fire, aim, fire', and through an emphasis on monitoring, these two phases could continue to repeat themselves (Earl and Stoll, 1992).

The principal was concerned that too few people had been involved in the philosophy committee. This did not seem to be borne out in interview responses; teachers believed they were as involved as they wanted to be. Like a few of the Burgundy teachers, however, some felt that it was not the words or the statement, but the intent behind it that was important. The statement, to them, merely captured what had occurred in the school for several years:

> *"There's support for the drive behind the statement. I don't know whether there's really anything behind the actual statement itself, the sentences or whatever."*

> *"The philosophy of the school is probably better known . . . by the staff than anything else . . . it's probably the easiest part to get across because it has been a natural way for this staff to act for years anyway, even before we formalised it."*

The principal was seen to promote the statement to new staff, at the start of the year, and to refer to it regularly. He reflected, however, that due to an influx of new teachers, it would need to be reviewed to see whether it was still appropriate and meaningful.

Thus, although very different in length and scope from the Burgundy statement (see Appendix D1), Red Maple's philosophy was articulated before school growth planning commenced officially. It also grew out of people's values and ways of working, even though these had been discussed less frequently as a whole staff than at Burgundy. The principal argued:

"I think we have to understand what we stand for and . . . believe in, then we can talk goals and directions. If they are counter to what underlies the base of the school . . . it seems to me to be counterproductive."

The statement thus became a standard against which future decisions could be made and was a starting point out of which growth plan goals emerged.

School Growth Planning

The four paragraphs in the philosophy statement each captured an idea. The principal and a vice principal took these four focus areas and turned them into organisers for the school plan: curriculum; instruction; climate and community. The principal remembered:

". . . the two of us . . . were able to put a framework for a model together. It just flowed from the statement of philosophy . . . what we did was set up a structure and then, as we had done in the past, we began to involve people, and that's when the school goals committee came along to begin to flesh it out as soon as we had a sense of a model and organisers."

In the principal's view, time was taken to involve other people:

"We let it evolve to a large degree. We didn't lay anything on anybody. All the plans of action came from the staff themselves."

Once the plan had been completed, however, it was circulated with a document that made clear expectations for staff commitment:

"Actual planning takes place at the 'local level'; it is an expectation that all departments, committees and, where appropriate, student groups will:

- **review their successes and priorities in the spring**
- **endorse and commit plans of action to ONE of the goals (organizers) in September**
- **follow-through on these plans of action during the school year."**

A department head commented on early staff reactions to growth planning at Red Maple:

"We've had school goals before, but here it was, a straight commitment from you, and it was documented for all to see, so there was some form of accountability there. My perception is people in my department felt very threatened . . . how would they be evaluated?"

Some months later, a teacher also cautioned:

". . . as long as the people who are very interested in positively . . . executing the plan are sensitive to . . . other types of personalities, then I think the plan will work out well. Otherwise . . ."

Awareness of and respect for teachers' concerns and level of commitment thus appeared to be important.

From the teachers' perspective in March 1991, although not all of them saw planning as a whole school process (see Table D2-4), fewer of them than the system sample felt it needed to be (71%, compared with 85% of the system sample). They were also convinced their school had clear goals, although nearly half (43%) were uncertain what their peers thought of these goals.

Table D2-4
School growth planning - a comparison between Red Maple and Halton staff

	% Agree	
	Red Maple (N=21)	**Halton (N=181)**
The school has developed a set of clearly stated goals.	95	78
Planning is a collaborative process involving all staff.	62	61
Parents, students and community members have input into the school's growth planning process.	62	44
Staff consider the school goals to be important.	48	49
Activities throughout the school support and and reinforce school goals.	76	66
School goals are shared with the school community.	62	53
School goals are regularly reviewed by the staff.	76	71
Our School Growth Plan includes ways of evaluating our successful goal achievement.	52	48

Interviewees ranged from the positive to the more skeptical:

> *". . . a lot of the goals just tie in with people's personal philosophies and what they think good quality education involves. The staff is committed to quality."*
>
> *"I really do think that those are the things that the school should be concentrating on."*
>
> *"They seem like standard goals. There doesn't seem to be anything the matter with them. It's like motherhood and apple pie - they address what politically needs to be addressed and they also make sense too . . . I don't think it's part of our day-to-day teaching. I don't think they impinge on me a great deal at a conscious level. They make sense to me and I support them, but I don't think to myself before I do something, 'Let's see what goal I can put this into.' "*
>
> *"Essentially . . . it is semantics. It's nice to come up with nice, clean catchphrases . . . but I'm not sure that the implementation is clear cut. Therefore, I'm not sure that people see it as something that they live."*
>
> *"I thought there was a very serious attempt to capture in this document everything that's going on in the school . . . It's a summary of the school."*

An issue raised in two of these quotes is the reality of goal implementation. Do growth plans really leave the paper on which they are written? The last comment gives a possible reason for teachers' uncertainty. Red Maple's plan was eight pages long, excluding the philosophy statement and model, and included 40 activities. Several staff felt the plan was overwhelming. A vice principal believed that staff did not really have a clear sense of what most of the goals were. Rather, they viewed them *"as individual things they work on"*, and focused particularly on what they or their departments were doing. In her opinion:

> *". . . as long as a few people have a sense of an overall plan, it doesn't really concern me too much that the staff as individuals just are working on one thing. What would concern me is if individuals on staff felt they were the only ones working on the goals and nobody else was doing anything."*

From teachers' descriptions of individual goals in which they were involved, it appeared that most people actively worked to implement the plan, particularly in the areas of instruction and curriculum, even if they

were not knowledgeable about its details. The nature and size of a growth plan are discussed in Chapter 10.

Monitoring and evaluation of the growth planning process and some of its social outcomes was fairly detailed and included: regular presentations at staff meetings; a mid-year questionnaire from the school goals committee; a mid-year Manager's Letter between the principal and each department head; baseline data from a staff collaboration survey, developed by the researcher; readministration of the 'general level survey' to students (see Vernon Heights vignette in Chapter 5); and the teacher interviews.

The school goals committee presented a creative update on the plan at a staff meeting using a horse race format. This caused amusement, but the consensus among teachers was that the impact was lost as few people understood the session's purpose.

In terms of the goals themselves, some committees or departments had developed success criteria but, as with their elementary counterparts at Burgundy, there was some uncertainty around evaluation:

> *"One of the ways in which I didn't succeed was in getting a good handle on how much effect I was having on them . . . I didn't get enough hard data."*

Individual teachers, however, described positively the impact of working on a particular goal on their own behaviour and attitudes:

> *"It's really given me . . . insights into the strategies and possibilities for helping students be successful."*

> *"I'm more organised . . . kids seem to be able to learn more."*

> *"I think my teaching methods for certain areas of the course have really improved as a result . . ."*

Thus, the growth plan appeared beneficial in that it brought teachers into contact with each other and new ideas. Through the emphasis on collaboration, people had the opportunity to try out new ideas in an environment of trust.

When asked if they felt Red Maple's plan would make it a more effective school, several teachers commented on the importance of it 'getting off the

paper', being communicated to students, and all people, whether adults or students, playing a role to ensure that it happened:

> *"I would get away from the paper scaffolding. Get it down to the grass roots . . ."*

Some teachers thought that they and their colleagues needed more help in how to understand and implement the plan, whereas others seemed to understand it well and perceived it as being the organiser or 'coat peg' on which they could hang all they wanted to do.

Two particularly interesting issues emerged in teachers' responses. Some felt that the school growth plan did not have to contain everything:

> *". . . it's not always necessary that everything that's done be tied to the goals, and if you start to hear people saying 'I did this and it's one of our goals' . . . it's unclear whether you might even have a backlash . . ."*

It appeared from both of the case profiles that these schools wanted to fit as much as possible in their growth plans. The nature of school growth plans is discussed in Chapter 10.

A few other teachers raised the issue of relevance of specific goals in the current society, and that perhaps what was appropriate in 1990 might no longer be in 1992:

> *"I thought they were viable goals for where we are right now. There are things that may come up in the future. Maybe computers become more important and other things become less."*

> *". . . recognise the fact that the school we planned for a couple of years ago isn't the same school today."*

> *"I think it will* (make it more effective) *as long as it keeps changing . . . for every batch of new kids . . . it has to change."*

The relevance of school effectiveness correlates and other current sources for growth planning is examined in Chapter 11.

Red Maple was a considerably larger school than Burgundy, and the principal was one step removed from staff due to the department head structure, and yet he also exerted 'positive manipulation', even if in more subtle ways.

Leadership

It was noted earlier that Red Maple's principal was not perceived to place a strong emphasis on curriculum and instruction. Nonetheless, he was seen to participate in school-based staff development and had offered teachers release time to work together. As one commented:

> *"The organisation at the top helps make the teachers a little freer to do other things. There's more chance of us getting together and talking about our things."*

He was generally perceived an effective communicator and listener (91% of his staff felt this, compared with 78% of the system sample):

> *"I think as a whole the staff feel more comfortable approaching the administration with problems, concerns or suggestions . . . it has opened some communication between staff and administration."*

He was also seen to have high expectations (81% of the teachers reported this). In comparison to his counterparts in Halton, he was perceived by most (76%) of his staff to communicate a clear vision for the school:

> *". . . anyone who comes to the school for an interview is given the philosophy statement to read . . . certainly* (he) *alludes to it regularly and he prefaces many of his decisions by referring to it."*

Personability and approachability were also seen to be strengths. Several teachers noted a change in staff morale since his arrival. In one teacher's perception, he was *"trying to promote climate and I've noticed it taking effect"*. Small details were appreciated, such as refreshments at staff meetings.

Visibility was an issue. Interestingly, although just over half (52%, compared with 65% of the system sample) saw the principal as being visible throughout the school, he was not berated for this. Rather, people explained that he was very busy and often outside the school promoting it. When he was there he was seen to be actively engaged with staff members and students, visiting classrooms to convey the school's philosophy or other key issues, and attending sports matches. A few teachers commented that they wished he could continue 'working behind the scenes' but also be more visible. In his own view, he saw himself as available:

"I won't get anything done at this desk day in and day out because it is important that the door be open, so people come in and I will listen."

The teachers believed that the principal was enabling and supportive, and that he demonstrated confidence in them. One teacher commented:

". . . probably the most important strength of this school is if a staff member took an initiative, they're also given the power to carry it through which, in my mind is essential to enjoy success."

"Staff are being encouraged to experiment, to try something new."

His development of the programme planning committee appeared to be an example of one attempt to promote leadership among other staff.

The change in principals was viewed by one teacher as *"an utterly fantastic night and day change"* from an authoritarian style to one that was laissez-faire and supportive. Essentially, he was seen as a very positive person, *"and that filters down through the ranks."*

Conclusion

Like its counterpart, the elementary case profile (see Appendix D1), this one illustrates the effective schools questionnaire results and the growth planning process at secondary school level (see Chapter 8). Red Maple's principal hoped that the major features of the school's plan were consistent with the characteristics of school effectiveness research, but pointed out that:

". . . it was important to us to realise that we had come to the identification of these qualities through an internal process that was unique to our school and our sphere of control."

More than any other school, Red Maple articulated a desire to promote equity, a key feature of school effectiveness. Although not completely successful in teachers' eyes, the intention was very real and attempts were made to implement this.

The areas examined by the school also mirrored many of the effectiveness characteristics, as did the climate-setting, development of staff collegiality, and instructional focus processes. Furthermore, the outcome of self-esteem and its measurement is important as demonstrated in the

more recent British research, even if at elementary level (see Mortimore et al., 1988). Thus, in its own way, Red Maple school was linking school effectiveness and school improvement.

APPENDIX E

Halton Board of Education

Characteristics of Effective Schools

A Common Mission

Effective schools develop a common mission that articulates their purpose, and gives them a sense of direction.

Clear Goals

In effective schools, clearly stated and mutually agreed upon goals communicate the school's focus on learning, and enhance the school's capacity for rational planning and action.

Instructional Leadership

Effective schools are led by principals who are acknowledged to be the school's leader and manager of its instructional program. The leader has a clear understanding of the school's mission and is able to state it in direct concrete terms. This mission focuses upon the belief that all students can learn, and that schools can and do make a difference.

Shared Values and Beliefs

Principals work with teachers, students, parents and community to articulate a shared set of beliefs about learning, and together they develop the school's learning environment.

Emphasis on Learning

Effective schools are places of learning for everyone, students and teachers alike.

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Students' progress is regularly and systematically monitored, through a variety of methods. In this way strengths and weaknesses in learning and instruction can be identified. Students are also involved in assessing their own progress.

High Expectations

Teachers believe students can learn and set high standards for learning. The principal communicates high expectations for staff in promoting student achievement.

Teacher Collegiality and Development

Students benefit academically when their teachers share ideas, co-operate in activities and assist one another's intellectual growth. The staff exhibit cohesiveness, identify problems, take action, have a shared approach to planning, and work together.

Instructional and Curriculum Focus

Intellectually challenging teaching is characterized by: appropriate curriculum and materials; planning; problem-solving; high academic learning time; frequent monitored homework; maximum communication; and use of a variety of instructional strategies. Student needs are determined. A plan is then developed to meet these needs, and the plan is implemented with appropriate strategies and resources.

A Climate Conducive to Learning

A positive school climate is one where affective development is facilitated: where students see themselves as able, valuable and responsible, and where students choose to learn and are invited to learn. Above all, in a school with a positive climate, people come first.

Student Involvement and Responsibility

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and, through involvement, to learn organization, planning, discussion, decision-making and leadership skills.

Physical Environment

Pictures, plants and student work are in evidence and attention is paid to both staff and student comfort and safety.

Recognition and Incentives

Effective schools have multiple opportunities for recognition throughout the school, in academic and other areas. Teachers are also recognized.

Positive Student Behaviour

All teachers and students are involved in problem solving, which focuses on causes rather than symptoms. Student self-control is encouraged.

Parent and Community Involvement and Support

There is regular communication between the school and the home as to how parents can support their child's achievement as well as the school's academic goals. There are a wide variety of opportunities for parents and the community to become constructively involved in the school.

APPENDIX F

THE FUTURE STATE: STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT - AN INDICATOR AND ACTION PLANS

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

KEY RESULT AREA 2: STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT

A positive student self-concept is integral to student achievement. Effective schools literature and research states that monitoring student growth in their attitudes is instrumental in developing a school climate conducive to student learning, and thus enhancing the learning itself.

INDICATOR 1

1. Students who perceive themselves to be worthwhile, responsible and happy, and who display qualities of meeting expectations, putting forth efforts for suitable rewards, creative problem-solving, and who get along with other people and respect the rights of others will have a positive self-concept.

ACTION PLANS

In order to enhance results in student self-concept, school and system personnel should perform certain activities which cause the goal to be achieved.

1. Assess and use information on student attitudes to develop a climate conducive to learning.

   a) System personnel working with the schools:
      i) employ systemwide assessments to determine:
         - student perceptions of school experience
         - student self-concept
      ii) assess teachers' attitudes toward the system and their school, i.e.,
         - teacher involvement
         - participation in program development
         - willingness to try new approaches

   b) Principals and staffs:
      i) develop assessment instruments and strategies to enhance school climate
      ii) examine the school's belief system and climate considering these factors:
         - student leadership
         - extra-curricular activities

   c) Classroom teachers:
      i) determine students' perceptions of self
      ii) develop strategies (e.g. peer tutoring) to enhance student perceptions of self
      iii) model behaviours such as:
         - caring
         - respecting differences
         - providing success experiences
         - recognizing accomplishments
         - giving approval
         - helping to relate positively
         - encouraging involvement
         - recognizing uniqueness of individuals

	AWARENESS	MECHANICAL	ROUTINE	REFINED
VISION	The Principal and the staff members have diverse values related to educational issues. They are beginning to recognize the need to attend to some school wide issues.	The Principal and key staff members gather data on the school and initiate staff discussion on some school wide themes. Each staff member is engaged in a meaningful way in the creation, communication and coaching others to address these school-wide themes.	Through the process of addressing school wide themes, the Principal and staff arrive at a shared vision of a future state for the school. This vision provides the basis for the development of school climate, staff relationships and the school's mission.	The Principal and staff periodically review the vision in conjunction with the larger community, and review decisions to ensure consistency with the vision. They also periodically clarify and revise the vision.
CLIMATE SETTING	Staff is not empowered. The Principal is aware of morale issues. The Principal and staff are aware of the need to develop a process for decision-making and communication, but both processes are non-existent or unclear.	Lines of decision-making and ways of communicating are clear. The staff is consulted on issues in an informal way. Attention is paid to: physical plant; discipline issues; organizational procedures.	Staff, student and community input is systematically sought on major issues. This helps to shape school policies. The staff feels empowered to initiate change in the school.	The staff is involved in all aspects of the school. Staff morale issues are attended to. The school enjoys high levels of trust and openness. Student and community input influence decisions.
COLLEGIALITY & IMPROVEMENT	Teachers focus on independent instructional goals. The staff values self-reliance. Teachers share little.	A school instructional goals process exists which allows teachers to collaborate and co-operate on a variety of instructional issues.	The staff agrees on a definition of effective teaching and the significance of instructional goals. Teachers routinely help each other plan and grow professionally.	Collegiality is pervasive. Staff continuously seeks and tests new ways to improve instruction both inside the school and through use of outside ideas from research and practice.
MISSION	The school staff is aware that other schools have a clear philosophy and mission statement which guides them.	A school mission statement exists. It is widely published and is said to encourage involvement and commitment of staff, students and community. Involvement and commitment, however, are unclear.	Staff, students, and community help to develop and implement a school mission statement. It is a statement of purpose based on a shared vision of a future state for the school, and serves to guide all the activities of the school.	All activities are guided by the entire staff's sense of mission. The mission is systematically reviewed.

	AWARENESS	MECHANICAL	ROUTINE	REFINED
ASSESSMENT	The staff makes no or only occasional reference to data.	The staff refers to data but doesn't use it in a systematic way.	The staff uses data in an ongoing and systematic way in preparation of the School Growth Plan.	The staff uses the existing data and initiates its own ways to gather information.
PLANNING	• The Principal is aware of the Effective Schools movement and that a body of research exists • The Principal knows the attributes of effective schools can be identified • The Principal attempts to bring the Effective Schools movement to the awareness level of the staff • The Principal attempts to implement one or two attributes of effective schools.	• The Principal can identify the critical attributes of effective schools . • The Principal is becoming familar with the effective schools research . • The Principal conducts one or two staff meetings to familiarize staff with the concept of Effective Schools • The Principal selects one or two attributes on the basis of perceived needs and incorporates the attributes into the school plan.	• The Principal and staff understand the concept of Effective Schools and can identify the attributes • The Principal appoints a School Growth Plan Team • The Principal and planning team review data, regional trends, and set priorities for new goals and directions • The Principal and staff determine the goals, and develop an implementation plan for the School Growth Plan.	• The Principal and staff know and use the characteristics of school effectiveness as a basis for the School Growth Plan • The Principal and staff develop a School Growth Plan based on a thorough assessment, an understanding of regional trends and the involvement of students and parents in the process .
IMPLEMENTATION	The staff is aware of the School Growth Plan but does not implement it.	The staff implements parts of the School Growth Plan. Of the parts implemented, some are done better than others. Implementation is not always consistent.	The staff understands the School Growth Plan and supports it. All parts of the Plan are implemented on a consistent basis. The Plan has been integrated with the Board's strategic plan, and impacts on personal growth plans.	The staff understands the Plan, and has assumed ownership for it. Each member of staff supports the others, and all parts of the Plan are fully implemented, according to the agreed-upon criteria.
EVALUATION	The staff is aware that evaluation is an important part of School Growth planning, but does not have an effective process.	The staff has a partial process for the summative evaluations of the School Growth Plan, usually in areas such as student achievement and self-concept.	The staff makes a formative and summative evaluation of key components of the plan such as: • student achievement, • self concept, • teacher attitudes, • community attitudes.	Staff continually evaluates all aspects of the Growth Plan as part of an on-going process of formative and summative evaluation.

APPENDIX H

HALTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVENESS

Shared Values and Beliefs

Indicators

All partners believe that schools can and do make a difference.

The staff shares the beliefs that:
- all children can learn
- students learn more when they see themselves as able, valuable and responsible.
- people are the most important components of schools

There is a culture of collaboration within the school.

The staff:
- shares a sense of friendliness and responsibility
- views one one another with respect
- deals with concerns in an open fashion
- promotes activities which reinforce school values
- promotes a sense of community within the school
- functions as a coherent and consistent team
- participates in shared decision-making

Clear Goals

Indicators

A clearly-stated and agreed-upon set of goals communicates the school's focus on learning.

The staff:
- participates in the development of the School Growth Plan
- has well-defined school policies that are recorded and communicated to staff students and parents
- is committed to the educational goals of the Halton Board

- feels accountable and responsible for student progress, achievement and self-concept
- works closely with support staff to enhance student achievement and self-concept

Instructional Leadership

Indicators

The Principal supports teachers in the realization of the school's goals.

The Principal:
- communicates a vision of an effective school
- mobilizes resources and regional support to help achieve school goals
- is a "visible presence" in the building to both staff and students
- is accessible to teachers and students
- is knowledgeable about instructional resources
- is considered an important instructional resource
- encourages the use of different instructional strategies to meet varying student needs
- encourages staff to be innovative and take risks
- becomes actively involved with teachers in their planning sessions
- observes in classrooms
- uses the Cooperative Supervision and Evaluation process to improve the quality of instruction
- promotes mutual conflict resolution, problem solving, cooperation, and sharing
- manages conflict effectively
- demonstrates strong group process skills
- promotes staff development related to school goals
- is an active participant in staff development

The Principal communicates high expectations.

The Principal:
- states clear expectations to staff
- presents a good role model
- communicates the belief that all students can learn and are expected to do so
- ensures that school policies reflect high expectations for all

students

- establishes a management system to ensure frequent monitoring of student growth

The Principal provides teachers with the support and leadership necessary to maintain positive student behaviour.

The Principal:

- ensures that staff, students and parents have a clear understanding of the expectations for student behaviour
- listens to students, parents and teachers
- ensures that discipline deals with inappropriate behaviour, not the student's personality
- treats all students equitably and fairly
- acts quickly following infractions and in a manner consistent with the Code of Student Behaviour
- supports teachers in student discipline

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Indicators

Regular and systematic monitoring of students' progress helps to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and instruction.

Teachers:

- know how to evaluate knowledge, skills and attitudes
- plan a variety of evaluation methods to meet students' needs
- match classroom assessment of student performance to learning outcomes
- use valid, reliable assessment instruments
- monitor students' learning frequently, both formally and informally
- observe students' daily performance and interaction with peers and adults
- communicate to students and parents how and why evaluation methods are used
- use results of assessment and observation for instructional diagnosis
- ensure that students receive quick feedback on results
- report in a clear and understandable way to students and their parents

- help students to understand and correct errors
- encourage parents to keep track of student performance
- keep organized, up-to-date records on a variety of student outcomes

High Expectations

Indicators

Teachers believe that all students can learn and that they can teach them.

Teachers:
- provide equal attention to all students in the classroom
- recognize individual differences and use them to enrich the classroom experience for everyone
- modify programs to meet individual learning needs in the most enabling environment
- have high expectations for learning and communicate them to students
- have expectations that are challenging but appropriate
- establish expectations for the quality of student work and maintain them consistently
- provide opportunities for students to set high expectations for themselves

Teacher Collegiality and Development

Indicators

Teachers see themselves as lifelong learners.

Teachers:
- reflect on their teaching
- take responsibility for their professional growth
- develop a personal professional growth plan
- participate in staff development activities
- understand that it is appropriate to ask for help and to take risks

The staff works together.

Teachers:
- agree that instructional goals are the highest priority

- plan together
- exchange ideas, programs and techniques about student learning
- observe one another in the classroom
- work together as coaching partners to support each other's teaching
- work to establish and maintain open lines of communication concerning both the academic and behavioural progress of all students

Instructional and Curriculum Focus

Indicators

Teachers develop plans to meet students' needs as determined by diagnosis of curriculum expectations.

Teachers:
- develop an appropriate timetable
- develop plans and units of study, based on Halton core curricula, which include clearly defined learning outcomes, instructional activities, groupings, timelines and evaluation techniques
- select appropriate resources to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes

Teachers implement their plans by ensuring clear and focused instruction.

Teachers:
- employ appropriate motivational strategies
- relate teaching activities to stated objectives
- use a variety of teaching skills and strategies
- relate lessons to previous lessons
- ensure that instruction includes reinforcement, guided practice, and review
- present lessons in sequential learning steps
- adapt lessons to respond to students' needs and interest
- focus the learning on higher order thinking skills
- support the learning process through appropriate classroom management techniques
- ensure that time is used to increase student learning
- maintain focus throughout lesson
- have materials, supplies and equipment ready for use
- start and end lessons on time

- ensure routines are unobtrusive to the learning process

Teachers communicate with students regarding objectives and student growth.

Teachers:
- communicate expectations on such student responsibilities as note making, project completion, neatness, homework, and class routines
- provide positive feedback
- respect and share interest in student input on relevant topics

<u>Student Involvement and Responsibility</u>

Indicators

There are opportunities for students to take responsibility and exercise leadership behaviour.

Teachers:
- give students a certain amount of responsibility for their own learning
- expect students to care for their own learning resources
- provide a role for students in the development of school rules and other practices which affect them
- provide a role for students in resolving student problems
- offer students opportunities for in-class and schoolwide service
- provide students with opportunities to perform community service
- consider extracurricular activities as a vital part of a fully functioning school
- encourage students to participate in student activities and school groups
- inform students about school activities on an ongoing basis

<u>Physical Environment</u>

Indicators

The school's appearance, comfort, and safety are conducive to learning and good morale.

The staff:

- ensure that the school is clean, tidy and in good repair
- make the school an inviting place to be
- display pictures, plants and students' work
- follow routines that contribute to the safety, comfort and welfare of students and staff

Recognition and Incentives

Indicators

There are multiple opportunities for reward and recognition throughout the school.

The staff:
- employ a clear concise reward system throughout the school
- ensure that the rewards and recognition system reflect the agreed upon values of the school
- use many public methods to recognize pupils
- use praise appropriately
- establish the idea that rewards come not only in praise and prizes but also implicit in the successful completion of a job well done
- recognize the growth of all students

Positive Student Behaviour

Indicators

Staff, students and community members are involved in problem solving.

The school:
- invites students and the community to contribute to the school's Code of Student Behaviour which emphasizes appropriate behaviours, reasons for these expectations and logical, clear consequences for breaches of the school's Code

The school is viewed as a place where discipline is fair and where students have the opportunity to experience success.

Teachers:
- work with students to establish a clear and understandable set of classroom rules and expectations
- define consequences for behaviour and consistently enforce the rules

- monitor student behaviour continuously
- emphasize positive behaviour and preventive measures
- use appropriate classroom management techniques
- recognize inappropriate student behaviour and act to change it
- focus on understanding the underlying causes of discipline problems
- give respect to students as well as receive it
- promote activities to enhance self-concept
- promote student self-discipline and self-control
- use punishment as a last resort

Parental and Community Involvement and Support

Indicators

There is regular communication between the school and the home.

The school:
- clearly communicates to parents expectations and procedures
- informs parents and the community as to how they can support the efforts of the school on a regular basis
- makes parents and community members feel welcome to visit the school
- encourages parents to ask questions related to the functioning of the school or the progress of their child

The teachers communicate with parents regarding objectives and student achievement.

Teachers:
- arrange to be available to parents for education-related purposes
- phone parents on a regular basis
- make the report card a quality document
- schedule interviews at required times and as necessary
- report progress regularly
- write notebook comments which are considerate, humane and constructive
- encourage parents and community members to act as volunteers
- call parents' attention to student achievement
- display diplomacy, courtesy and good manners when dealing with parents and the community

The school provides opportunities for parents and community members to become more knowledgeable about and constructively involved in the school and education in general.

The school:

- uses parents and community members as volunteers within classes to aid instruction
- invites parents and community members to participate with staff to deal with issues of interest and concern
- holds regularly scheduled program nights
- provides opportunities for parents to learn how to help their children
- involves parents and community members in a variety of social activities.

APPENDIX I

Scales and Subscales of Effective Schools Teacher Questionnaires

Scales	Item Numbers
• A common mission	1-28
• Emphasis on learning	29-51
• A climate conducive to learning	52-82

Subscales	Item Numbers
• A common mission	1-3
• Shared values and beliefs	4-8
• Clear goals	9-16
• Instructional leadership	17-28
• Emphasis on learning	29-32
• Frequent monitoring of student progress	33-38
• High expectations	39-41
• Teacher collegiality and development	42-45
• Focus on instruction and curriculum	46-51
• A climate conducive to learning	52-55
• Student involvement and responsibility	56-60
• Physical environment	61-63
• Recognition and incentives	64-68
• Positive student behaviour	69-75
• Parental and community involvement and support	76-82